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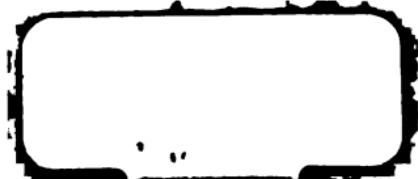
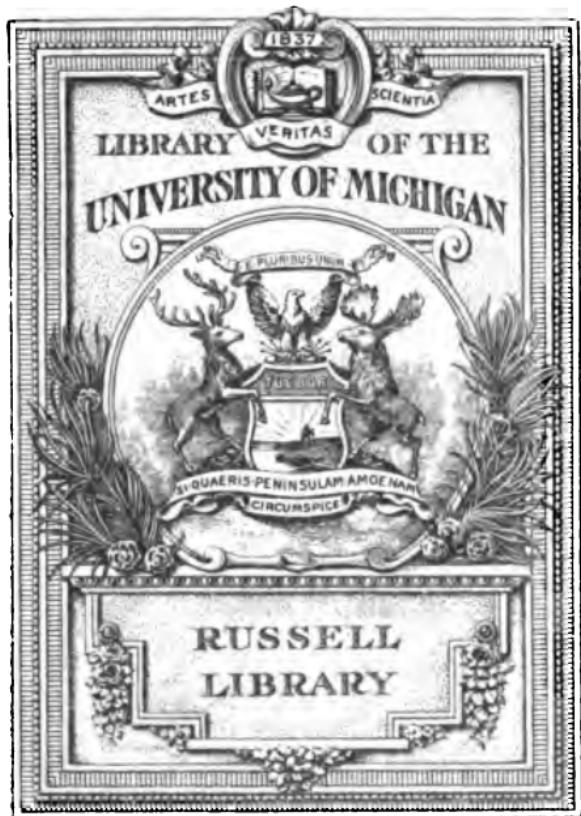
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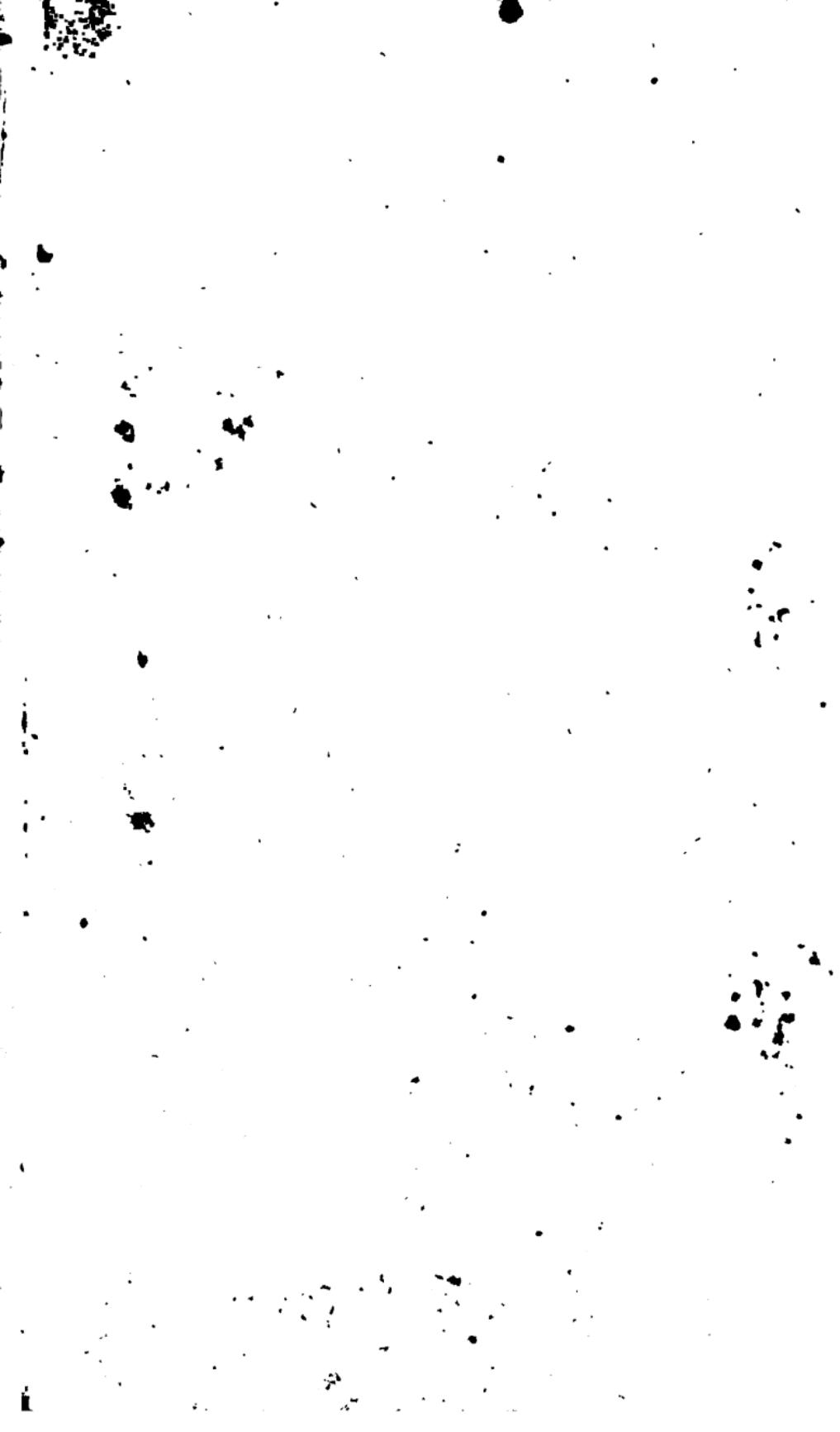
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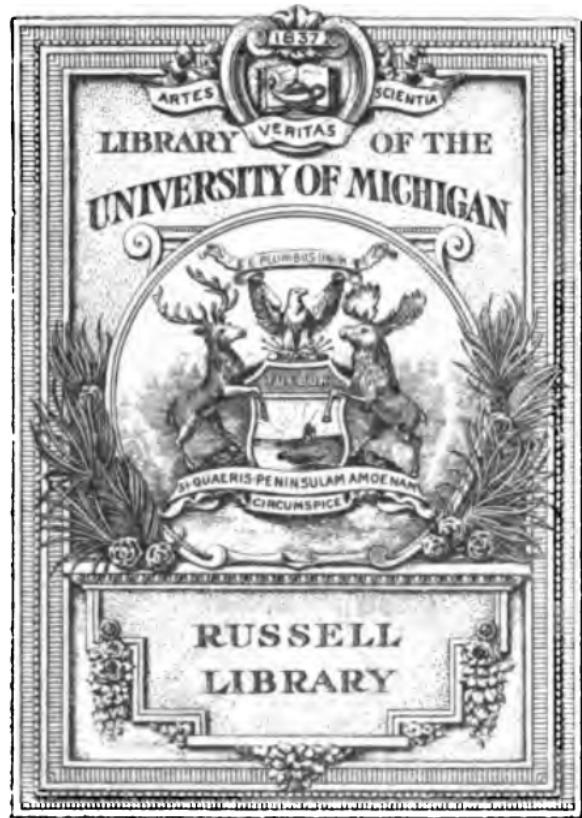
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"And he looked, and behold the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed."—*Moses.*
"Thus saith the Lord, behold I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream."—*Isaiah.*

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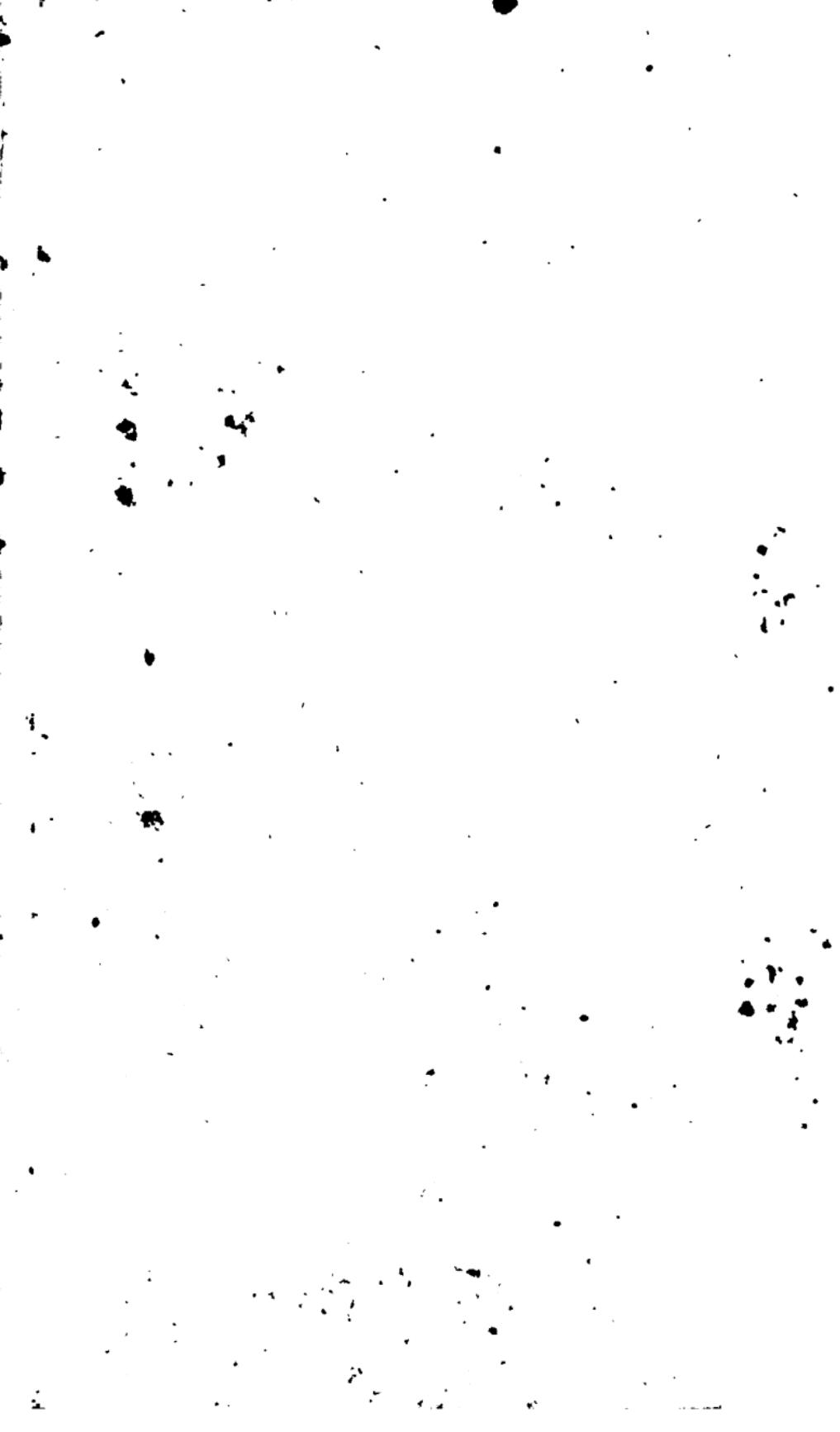
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here, and become prepared for the Church triumphant in glory. These are objects, which demand the most serious and prayerful attention; and the labors here recommended, will be followed by consequences lasting as eternity.

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CENTURY I.

CHAP. I.

A SUMMARY VIEW OF THE CHURCH, SO FAR AS IT MAY BE COLLECTED FROM SCRIPTURE.

JERUSALEM.

THAT repentance and remission of sins should be preached in the name of Jesus Christ, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, is an injunction which points out the nature of the Christian religion ; and teaches us where to look for the rise of a dispensation, the most glorious to God and beneficent to man.—Christianity found mankind universally in a state of sin and misery. In Judea alone, something of the worship of the true God existed. The forms of the Mosaic economy subsisted, but were greatly obscured and corrupted by Pharisaic tradition, Sadducean profaneness, and the defilement of heathen profligacy. That men needed to be made new creatures, and receive the forgiveness of sin, were ideas almost unknown in Judea. Scarcely in any age, had ignorance and wickedness a more general prevalence.

Such was the dismal night, in which the Sun of Righteousness made his appearance in the world. The darkest season was chosen by Him, “ who hath put the times and seasons in his own power,” for the exhibition of the Light of Life.

To know our own depravity and helplessness, and, by faith in Jesus Christ, to know, experimentally, the true remedy, is the genuine secret of real piety. When wickedness and profaneness had spread uni-

versally, and true piety had become almost extinct, it pleased God to erect the first Christian Church at Jerusalem.

Previously to this event, our Saviour had offered himself a sacrifice for sin, arisen from the dead, and ascended to glory. The Apostles, having witnessed our Lord's ascension, assembled in a large upper room at Jerusalem, and there, agreeably to their Master's command, waited for the reception of the Holy Spirit. This interesting season they spent mostly in prayer. On the day of Pentecost, one of the Jewish festivals, this era of divine visitation arrived. " Suddenly, there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house, where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them, cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them ; and they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

This strange event filled the surrounding multitude with astonishment. Some expressed admiration ; others, deriding, accused the Apostles of being intoxicated with wine. But Peter, boldly repelled the charge, and addressed himself, with such vehemence, to their hearts and consciences, that they could neither gainsay nor resist. The principal design of his sermon, was to beget conviction of sin in his hearers ; and so powerful were its effects, that multitudes were pricked to the heart, and so impressed with a sense of sin, that they cried, saying, " Men and brethren, what shall we do ? " Peter replied, " Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ." " Then they, that gladly received his word, were baptized, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." They, whose hearts God had smitten with a sense of guilt, and fear of punishment, were now consoled by the grace of forgiveness, and the prospect of future felicity.

Here we behold the regular appearance of the first Christian Church. Its members were not Christians in name merely ; they believed and understood the apostolic doctrines, concerning repentance and remission of sin in the name of Jesus Christ ; continued united to their Pastors, whom God had made instruments of their conversion ; frequently received the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, in which they enjoyed real communion with their Saviour ; and prayer was their daily employment and delight.

Their holy boldness toward God, and their joyful sensation of forgiveness, were tempered with heavenly humility and godly fear. They had felt the pangs of guilt, had seen what a price was paid for their redemption, and " rejoiced with trembling," as men, just emerging from the pit of destruction. The same spirit, which cried, *Abba Father*, in their hearts, taught them to fear God; to reverence his justice and holiness, and to dread sin as the greatest of evils.

The Apostles continued to preach the doctrines of repentance and remission of sin ; and their labors were so abundantly blessed, that the church was soon increased to five thousand.

The signal of persecution was now raised by the magistrates of Jerusalem. Some of the Apostles were imprisoned, and all commanded not to teach nor preach in the name of Jesus. But human power was unable to restrain them. " The Lord sent his angel to open the prison doors, and let the prisoners go free."

No sooner were the Apostles released from confinement, than they again commenced preaching, and when accused of disobedience, replied, " We ought to obey God rather than man."

The boldness with which the Apostles continued to preach Christ, called forth all the malice of their enemies, and a terrible storm of persecution seemed ready to burst upon them ; but was providentially prevented by Gamaliel, a Pharisee, who advised the ru-

lers to let those men alone, saying, "If this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought, but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it."

About this time, seven deacons were chosen, whose office was to supply the poor, and minister relief to the widows. Of these seven, Stephen was the most distinguished. "He, being full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people." His godly example soon excited the rage of his enemies, who employed men falsely to accuse him, and by this artifice, drew him before the Sanhedrim.

In his defence, he boldly accused the Jews, showing that they had been the betrayers and murderers of Jesus. "When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and gnashed on him with their teeth, and ran upon him, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him." But while in the agonies of death, he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this he fell asleep."

The eloquence of Cicero would be mere feebleness on this occasion. All praise is below the excellency of that spirit, which shone in this first of Christian Martyrs. Let it stand as an example of the genuine temper of martyrdom, of true faith in Christ, of real charity to men ; and let heroes of the world hide their heads in confusion.

A young man called Saul, who had been educated by Gamaliel at Jerusalem, was, at this time, a leader of the hosts, armed against the disciples of the Lord. Not satisfied with the devastation, which he made of the church at Jerusalem, he went to the high priest, and solicited a commission from him to persecute the Christians at Damascus ; and commenced his journey, more like a wolf than a man—"breathing slaughter and death." But while he was ready to invade the fold and destroy the sheep, the great Shepherd withstood his rage, disarmed him of his fury, and led him captive.

When on his way to Damascus, thirsting for the blood of Christians, the Son of God arrested him in his mad career ; and by a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, blinded his eyes, struck him to the ground, and while he trembled at his feet, proclaimed, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." Paul was terrified, convicted, and condemned. He could no longer resist, but threw himself at the feet of his injured and offended Conqueror, and in language, highly expressive of obedience, exclaimed, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Christ said to him "Arise and stand upon thy feet, and in Damascus it shall be told thee what to do." "For I have appeared unto you for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of the things which thou hast seen and of those things, in the which I will appear unto thee, delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles, unto whom I now send thee."

An astonishing display of divine grace is this. Paul is suddenly convicted and converted ; he believes, is forgiven, justified, made a chosen vessel, and appointed by Christ an Apostle to bear his name before the Gentiles.

Paul was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. He stopped not to confer with flesh and blood, but immediately, upon his receiving sight and being filled with the Holy Ghost, he preached in Damascus, to the astonished multitude, Jesus Christ and him crucified.

From this time, the whole vehemence of his natural character and all the powers of his soul, were consecrated to the service of Jesus Christ ; and until his death, he was engaged in a course of labors with unparalleled industry and success. This is he, who is commonly known by the name of St. Paul, and his memorial is blessed forever.

Saul having espoused the cause of Christianity, the fury of the persecution, for a short time, subsided. God gave rest to his church, and the disciples "Walk-

ed in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost.”*

At this time, the civil power of Judea was invested in the hands of Herod Agrippa, who slew James, the son of Zebedee. Finding that this act was popular, he apprehended and imprisoned Peter, with an intention to have him publicly executed. But prayer to God was made for him, without ceasing; and it prevailed. The night before his intended execution, the Lord sent his angel and delivered him from prison, and from all the expectation of the Jews.

Little did Herod apprehend, that his own death would precede that of his prisoner. On a public occasion he appeared in great splendor, and delivered an oration, so pleasing to his audience, that they shouted, “It is the voice of a god and not of a man.” That moment he was smitten by an angel with an incurable disease, because he gave not God the glory.

The next memorable event, in the mother church, was the first Christian council, held at Jerusalem, about twenty years after the ascension of our Savior. The object of this was to settle disputes, which arose respecting circumcision.

JUDEA AND GALILEE.

The Holy Land was divided into three provinces, Judea, Galilee, and Samaria.

Soon after the persecution which arose about Stephen, the blessed tidings of the Gospel, began to be spread through Judea and Galilee, and were attended with rapid success. Those, who had felt the flame of divine love in Jerusalem, being obliged to flee, preached throughout these regions; and many were converted.

The principal instrument, in establishing these churches, was Peter. He passed through all quar-

* See Christian Observer, Vol. I.

ters, went to places most remote from the capital, and the Lord wrought effectually in him for the conversion of the Jews.

SAMARIA.

This country lay between Judea and Galilee, though distinguished from them both in its polity and religion. The inhabitants possessed a large part of the district, which belonged to the ten tribes, whom the kings of Assyria carried into captivity. These conquerors filled their vacant places with colonists, who mixed the worship of Jeboval with their idols; vainly boasting of their relation to Jacob; professed to regard the law of Moses, and despised, or at least depreciated the rest of the Old Testament.

The divine Saviour pitied this people, and visited them in mercy; some were converted, and the effusions of his kindness toward them, appeared finally in abundance.

Philip being driven from Jerusalem by the persecution, was directed to go to Samaria; there he preached Christ, and the Gospel entered the hearts of so large a number, that there was great joy in that city.

The Apostles, hearing of the happy effects of the Gospel at Samaria, sent thither Peter and John, who labored effectually, and saw a blessed effusion of the Holy Spirit.

CESAREA

The residence of a Roman governor, was situated on the confines of Syria and Judea.

Philip, after a laborious passage from Azotus, preaching through all the cities, settled, at length, in Cesarea.

The Gospel was first preached at this place by Peter at the request of Cornelius, a Roman centurion, who had been warned by an angel to send for him. Apparently to the suggestions of the Spirit.

Cæsarea, and came to the house of Cornelius, who had called together his kinsmen, and near friends. Peter preached the Gospel to them ; the whole company were converted, and the Holy Ghost sealed the Apostle's sermon. They were all baptized, and at their desire, Peter spent a few days with them, instructed them farther in Christian principles, and then left them to the care of Philip.

ANTIOCH.

The Gospel was first preached at Antioch by some Cypriot and Cyrenian Jews, who broke through the pale of distinction, and, at the metropolis of Syria, preached the Lord Jesus to the Gentiles. The Lord, willing to overcome effectually, the reluctance of self-righteous bigotry, attended their ministry with remarkable success. The mother church, hearing of this, sent Barnabas to assist in carrying on the work, which needed more laborers. Finding many converts, he exhorted them to perseverance ; and the addition of believers was still so large, that he sought a coadjutor. Saul came to his assistance, and this populous city employed them a year and a half. Leaving Antioch, they went from place to place, preaching the Gospel, and patiently suffering much persecution.

GALATIA.

The love of God, where it exists in an ardent degree, is insatiable. The Apostle's heart is not content with the trophies already erected in many parts of Asia Minor. As the miser thinks no acquisition great, while any prospect of farther gain opens to his view ; so, Paul could not, with complacency, rest in the attainments already made, while so much ground lay before him in the hands of Satan. He therefore travelled into Galatia, and great numbers of the

people of that country received the gospel, and several churches were planted in the district. The Apostle laid clearly before them the riches of divine grace ; and they had the strongest impression of its truth, and so felt the power of its energy, that they seemed, as it were, to see the Son of God crucified among them, received the promised spirit of adoption, and cheerfully suffered much persecution for the name of Christ.

PHILIPPI.

While Paul and Silas were at Troas, uncertain whither they should go next, a nightly vision, in which a man of Macedonia, entreated Paul to come over and help them, determined, at once, their destination. Hence, they sailed from Troas, came into Philippi, a city of Macedonia, and preached the gospel for the first time in Europe.

Having labored there for some time with success, they were, at length, imprisoned for casting out a spirit of divination. The jailor thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. In this situation, these servants of God, though oppressed with pain, hunger, and every disagreeable circumstance, were enabled, at midnight, to pray and sing praises to God. The Lord heard them ; there was a great earthquake ; the prison doors were opened ; and the bands of the prisoners were loosed. The jailor awoke, and in his first trepidation, was about to rush into eternity. But Paul cried out, "Do thyself no harm, we are all here." Struck with horror at the thought of the world to come, he came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, saying, "What must I do to be saved ;" "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," was their reply. These things had a most salutary effect. Both the jailor and his household believed and were baptized.

versally, and true piety had become almost extinct, it pleased God to erect the first Christian Church at Jerusalem.

Previously to this event, our Saviour had offered himself a sacrifice for sin, arisen from the dead, and ascended to glory. The Apostles, having witnessed our Lord's ascension, assembled in a large upper room at Jerusalem, and there, agreeably to their Master's command, waited for the reception of the Holy Spirit. This interesting season they spent mostly in prayer. On the day of Pentecost, one of the Jewish festivals, this era of divine visitation arrived. "Suddenly, there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house, where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them, cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them ; and they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

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CORINTH,

Was at this time the metropolis of Greece. The Apostles went thither, and having labored for a short time, a spirit of persecution arose ; but by a vision, in which Christ assured him, that he had much people in that place, Paul was encouraged to continue there a year and a half. After he had left the place, Apollo was a very powerful instrument in building up that church.

ROME.

Our first accounts of the Roman church are very imperfect. This church, however, was then so flourishing, that her faith was spoken of throughout the world.

THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA.

On Paul's departure from Corinth, he visited Ephesus, one of the seven churches of Asia. His first stay was short ; but the impression made on his hearers was very great. He left Aquila and Priscilla with them, whose labors were afterwards assisted by Apollos.

On Paul's return to Ephesus, he preached three months in the Jewish Synagogue, till the usual perverseness of the Jews induced him to desist, and to form the new converts into a distinct church. For the space of two years he daily preached in the school of one Tyrannus ; and the whole region of Asia had, at different times, an opportunity of hearing the gospel.

In no place, does the word of God seem so much to have triumphed, as at Ephesus. No less numerous than those of Corinth, the believers were much more spiritual. The work of conversion was deep, vigorous, and soul-transforming to a great degree. The spiritual power of Jesus had never been seen in a

stronger light since the day of Pentecost. Here Paul labored for three years, with great success, and left pastors to superintend that, and the neighboring churches.

St. John, the only survivor of the Apostles, long continued his fatherly care over the churches of Asia. During his exile at Patmos, he was favored with a remarkable vision from the Lord Jesus, and directed to address a letter to each of the Asiatic churches. These letters contained several distinct charges, threatenings, commendations, encourgements, &c.

The Ephesians were still alive in the faith; and patiently bore the cross, although they had declined from the intensest of that love, which they at first exhibited.

The church of Smyrna was next addressed. It was in a state of great purity of doctrine, and holiness of heart and life.

The church of Pergamus was also approved in general. They lived in the midst of a very impious people, who, in effect worshipped Satan himself, and did all in their power to support his kingdom. Yet was the zeal of this church firm and steady.

The church of Thyatira was in a flourishing state; charity, active services, patient dependence on God and a steady reliance on the divine promises, marked their works.

The church of Sardis presents us with an unpleasant spectacle.

Philadelphia is highly extolled. They were a humble, charitable, fervent people, deeply sensible of their own weakness, and fearful of being seduced by Satan and their own hearts.

The Laodicean church was even worse than that of Sardis. It was in a lukewarm state. Such a state is most odious to Christ; because his religion calls for the whole vehemence of the soul, and bids us to cool only in worldly things.

CHAPTER II.

THE REMAINDER OF THE FIRST CENTURY.

"We are now obliged to dismiss our infallible guide, the Scripture, and pursue the history of the church, depending merely on human authority.

It is evident, that the Apostles did not, in general, leave Judea, till after the first council held at Jerusalem. Neither did they ever seem in haste to leave the land of their nativity. Probably, the threatening appearances of its desolation, by the Romans, hastened their departure into distant regions. And so great were the effects of their exertions among the Gentiles that, before the close of the third century, the sanctifying influences of the gospel were felt throughout the Roman Empire.

This chapter we shall divide into three parts.

I. Review the progress and persecution of the church.

II. The lives, characters, and deaths of the Apostles and most celebrated Evangelists.

III. The general character of Christians in this age.

In the year 64 the Romans first issued edicts for persecuting the Christians; nor were they satisfied till they had wreaked their vengeance in ten general persecutions.

During the reign of Nero, the city of Rome sustained a general conflagration. The Emperor, who is supposed to have been the author of this calamity, accused the Christians of having set it on fire. They were, at this time, so generally hated and despised, that they could be calumniated with impunity. Accordingly a persecution commenced against them, which raged with dreadful fury.

Some were crucified, others torn by dogs, and many were covered with the skins of wild beasts, dipped in tar, and then burned alive in the night, to afford light and sport to the spectators.

Three or four years were probably the utmost extent of this tremendous persecution. In the year 68 the tyrant was himself, by a dreadful exit, summoned before the divine tribunal. He left the Roman world in a state of extreme confusion. Judea partook of it in an eminent degree. During the reign of Vespasian, forty years after our Lord's sufferings, wrath came upon the Jewish nation to the utmost. History cannot furnish a parallel to their miseries, during the time that Jerusalem was besieged by Titus, the Roman general; rapine and murder, famine and pestilence within; fire and sword, and all the terrors of war without. Though they were terrified with prodigies and earthquakes, and though their iniquities were astonishingly multiplied; they still expected the special protection of Heaven, and resolved to resist, and did resist, the Roman power even unto madness.—Having sustained a siege of six months, during which more than a million perished, the city was taken and destroyed, agreeably to the predictions of our Saviour. Ninety-seven thousand Jews were taken captives. Those under seventeen, were sold for slaves; the others were generally destroyed by wild beasts.*

The Christians of Judea fled to a city beyond Jordan called Pella, and were all preserved from the sword of the Romans.

The death of Nero, and the destruction of Jerusalem, occasioned some respite to the sufferings of the Christians. We have no farther accounts of their being persecuted, till the reign of Domitian, who succeeded to the empire in the year 81.

Toward the end of his reign, he renewed the horrors of Nero's persecution, and put to death a large

* Newton on the Prophecies.

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people of that country received the gospel, and several churches were planted in the district. The Apostle laid clearly before them the riches of divine grace ; and they had the strongest impression of its truth, and so felt the power of its energy, that they seemed, as it were, to see the Son of God crucified among them, received the promised spirit of adoption, and cheerfully suffered much persecution for the name of Christ.

PHILIPPI.

While Paul and Silas were at Troas, uncertain whither they should go next, a nightly vision, in which a man of Macedonia, entreated Paul to come over and help them, determined, at once, their destination. Hence, they sailed from Troas, came into Philippi, a city of Macedonia, and preached the gospel for the first time in Europe.

Having labored there for some time with success, they were, at length, imprisoned for casting out a spirit of divination. The jailor thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. In this situation, these servants of God, though oppressed with pain, hunger, and every disagreeable circumstance, were enabled, at midnight, to pray and sing praises to God. The Lord heard them ; there was a great earthquake ; the prison doors were opened ; and the bands of the prisoners were loosed. The jailor awoke, and in his first trepidation, was about to rush into eternity. But Paul cried out, "Do thyself no harm, we are all here." Struck with horror at the thought of the world to come, he came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, saying, "What must I do to be saved ;" "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," was their reply. These things had a most salutary effect. Both the jailor and his household believed and were baptized.

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This Apostle lived three or four years after his return to Asia Minor ; having been preserved to the age of a hundred years for the benefit of the church, and a pattern of charity and goodness, for the disciples of Christ in all succeeding ages.

The next character, which we shall notice, is Clement. He was cotemporary with the Apostle Paul, his fellow laborer, and the one whom Paul speaks of as having his name written in the book of life. He long survived Paul and Peter, and was a great blessing to the Roman church, over which he presided nine years. His epistle to the Corinthians was read in many of the primitive churches, and exceedingly admired. A few quotations from it, will evince his belief in the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel.

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CORINTH,

Was at this time the metropolis of Greece. The Apostles went thither, and having labored for a short time, a spirit of persecution arose ; but by a vision, in which Christ assured him, that he had much people in that place, Paul was encouraged to continue there a year and a half. After he had left the place, Apollos was a very powerful instrument in building up that church.

ROME.

Our first accounts of the Roman church are very imperfect. This church, however, was then so flourishing, that her faith was spoken of throughout the world.

THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA.

On Paul's departure from Corinth, he visited Ephesus, one of the seven churches of Asia. His first stay was short ; but the impression made on his hearers was very great. He left Aquila and Priscilla with them, whose labors were afterwards assisted by Apollos.

On Paul's return to Ephesus, he preached three months in the Jewish Synagogue, till the usual perverseness of the Jews induced him to desist, and to form the new converts into a distinct church. For the space of two years he daily preached in the school of one Tyrannus ; and the whole region of Asia had, at different times, an opportunity of hearing the gospel.

In no place, does the word of God seem so much to have triumphed, as at Ephesus. No less numerous than those of Corinth, the believers were much more spiritual. The work of conversion was deep, vigorous, and soul-transforming to a great degree. The spiritual power of Jesus had never been seen

stronger light since the day of Pentecost. Here Paul labored for three years, with great success, and left pastors to superintend that, and the neighboring churches.

St. John, the only survivor of the Apostles, long continued his fatherly care over the churches of Asia. During his exile at Patmos, he was favored with a remarkable vision from the Lord Jesus, and directed to address a letter to each of the Asiatic churches. These letters contained several distinct charges, threatenings, commendations, encourgements, &c.

The Ephesians were still alive in the faith; and patiently bore the cross, although they had declined from the intensest of that love, which they at first exhibited.

The church of Smyrna was next addressed. It was in a state of great purity of doctrine, and holiness of heart and life.

The church of Pergamus was also approved in general. They lived in the midst of a very impious people, who, in effect worshipped Satan himself, and did all in their power to support his kingdom. Yet was the zeal of this church firm and steady.

The church of Thyatira was in a flourishing state; charity, active services, patient dependence on God and a steady reliance on the divine promises, marked their works.

The church of Sardis presents us with an unpleasant spectacle.

Philadelphia is highly extolled. They were a humble, charitable, fervent people, deeply sensible of their own weakness, and fearful of being seduced by Satan and their own hearts.

The Laodicean church was even worse than that of Sardis. It was in a lukewarm state. Such a state is most odious to Christ; because his religion calls for the whole vehemence of the soul, and bids us to "cool only in worldly things."

CENTURY II.

CHAP. I.

THE GENERAL STATE OF THE CHURCH IN THIS CENTURY.

THE master of the Roman world, at the commencement of this century, was the renowned Trajan, under whose reign, the Christians sustained another general persecution. His predecessor Nerva had restored the Christian exiles, and granted full toleration to the church. Here John, the last of the Apostles, had recovered his station at Ephesus and slept in Jesus; before the short interval of tranquility was closed by the persecuting spirit of Trajan. This emperor had a confirmed prejudice against the Christians, and meditated the extinction of the name.

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Ignatius was another distinguished character, that suffered during the persecution of Trajan. In the year 70, the Apostles appointed him Bishop of Antioch; and in the year 107, he was martyred for the faith of Jesus.

Some were crucified, others torn by dogs, and many were covered with the skins of wild beasts, dipped in tar, and then burned alive in the night, to afford light and sport to the spectators.

Three or four years were probably the utmost extent of this tremendous persecution. In the year 68 the tyrant was himself, by a dreadful exit, summoned before the divine tribunal. He left the Roman world in a state of extreme confusion. Judea partook of it in an eminent degree. During the reign of Vespasian, forty years after our Lord's sufferings, wrath came upon the Jewish nation to the utmost. History cannot furnish a parallel to their miseries, during the time that Jerusalem was besieged by Titus, the Roman general; rapine and murder, famine and pestilence within; fire and sword, and all, the terrors of war without. Though they were terrified with prodigies and earthquakes, and though their iniquities were astonishingly multiplied; they still expected the special protection of Heaven, and resolved to resist, and did resist, the Roman power even unto madness.—Having sustained a siege of six months, during which more than a million perished, the city was taken and destroyed, agreeably to the predictions of our Saviour. Ninety-seven thousand Jews were taken captives. Those under seventeen, were sold for slaves; the others were generally destroyed by wild beasts.*

The Christians of Judea fled to a city beyond Jordan called Pella, and were all preserved from the sword of the Romans.

The death of Nero, and the destruction of Jerusalem, occasioned some respite to the sufferings of the Christians. We have no farther accounts of their being persecuted, till the reign of Domitian, who succeeded to the empire in the year 81.

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number of persons accused of Atheism, the common charge alleged against Christians for their refusing to worship the Pagan gods. Some were condemned for embracing Jewish customs, many of whom were put to death, and others spoiled of their goods.

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downwards, a kind of death, which he desired, from a conviction of being unworthy the honor of suffering in the same manner in which his Lord had done.

Peter's wife had been called to martyrdom a short time before himself. He saw her led to execution, and rejoicing at the grace of God vouchsafed to her, addressed her by name, and exhorted, and comforted her, with, "Remember the Lord."

Of the labors of eight Apostles, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, Jude, Simeon, and Matthias, nothing in particular is recorded. Of the Apostle John, a few valuable fragments may be collected. He was present at the council held at Jerusalem in the year 50; and probably did not leave Judea till that time. Asia Minor was the great theatre of his labors, particularly Ephesus.

Tertullian relates, that by order of Domitian, John was cast into a caldron of boiling oil, and came out without receiving any injury. Domitian then banished him to the solitary isle of Patmos, where he was favored with the vision of the Apocalypse. After the death of Domitian, he returned from Patmos and resumed his labors in Asia Minor.

On one of his tours, he became acquainted with a remarkably engaging young man, whom he warmly recommended to the care of a particular Bishop. The young man was baptized, openly acknowledged Christ, and for a considerable time adorned his profession. Being, however, gradually corrupted by profligate companions, he became idle, intemperate, and finally so dissipated, as to become captain of a band of robbers. John, being informed of the conduct of the young man, went, in the vehemence of his charity, to the place of his residence, and exposed himself to be taken by the robbers. "Bring me," says he, "to your captain." They accordingly did. But the young man, as soon as he saw the Apostle, was smitten with confusion and fled. The aged Apostle following, cried, "My son,

why fiest thou from thy father unarmed and old? Fear not. As yet there remaineth hope of salvation. Believe me, Christ hath sent me." Hearing this, the young man stood still, trembled, and wept. John prayed, exhorted, and brought him back to the society of Christians; nor did he leave him; until he found him fully restored by divine grace.

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"How blessed, how amazing the gift of God, beloved. Life in immortality, splendor in righteousness, truth in liberty, faith in assurance, sobriety in holiness. And thus far in this life, we know experimentally. If the earnest of the Spirit be so precious, what must be the things, which God hath prepared for them that wait for him."

"Through him, that is, Jesus Christ, let us behold the glory of God shining in his face; through him, the eyes of our hearts were opened; through him our understanding, dark and foolish as it was, rises again in his marvellous light; through him the Lord would have us taste of immortal knowledge."

III. It remains to take a general view of Christianity in the first century.

We have beheld the most astonishing revolution in the human mind, and in human manners, effected, without the aid of human power; and even against the combined opposition of all the powers then in the world. This too was in countries, not rude and uncivilized; but in the most humanized, the most learned, and the most polished part of the globe.

Here we behold thousands converted from the grossest immoralities to the purest morals, suddenly reformed in understanding, in inclination, and affection, from a state of mere selfishness, transformed

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into the purest philanthropists, knowing, loving, and serving God, confiding in him amidst the severest sufferings, and serenely waiting for their dismission into a land of blissful immortality.

In doctrine they all worshipped the one living and true God, who revealed himself to them in three Persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Each of these, they were taught to worship from the very office of baptism, performed in the name of the Tri-une God.

The whole economy of grace so constantly reminded them of their obligations to the Father, who chose them to salvation, to the Saviour, who died for them, and to the Comforter, who supported and sanctified them ; and so perfectly did the doctrine of the Trinity comport with their views and feelings, that they were particularly incited to worship the Divine Three in One.

They all had similar convictions of sin, of their own helplessness, of a state of perdition ; and all agreed in relying on the atoning blood, perfect righteousness, and prevalent intercession of Jesus, as their only hope of heaven. Regeneration by the Holy Ghost was their common privilege, and without his constant influence, they acknowledged themselves obnoxious only to sin and misery.

We have seen the first Christians individually converted, and as the natural heart needs the same change still, the particular instances of conversion, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, are models for us at the present day.

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Trajan, being at this time at Antioch, on his way to the Parthian war, Ignatius came voluntarily into his presence, hoping by that means to avert the storm, which seemed ready to burst upon the Christians, by offering to suffer in their stead. After a short conference between them on the subject of Christianity, Trajan gave orders that Ignatius should be carried bound, to Rome, and there thrown to the wild beasts for the entertainment of the people. Accordingly, he was immediately made prisoner, put on board a ship, and with all expedition, transported to the place of execution. While on his passage the ship made port at Smyrna. Here he was allowed the pleasure of visiting Polycarp, Bishop of that place. They had both been fellow disciples of St. John, and the holy joy of their interview may be conceived by those who know what the love of Christ is, and how it operates in the hearts of those in whom it dwells.

While at this place, he wrote a number of epistles to Christian societies, to animate and strengthen their faith. Deputies were sent from various churches in Asia Minor to attend and console him, and to receive instruction by his spiritual communications.

From Smyrna he sailed to Troas. Here also several churches sent their messengers to visit and salute him; and Providence so far restrained the inhumanity of his guards, that he was allowed to have intercourse with them. Here he addressed three other epistles to the churches, in which he expressed his full belief in those doctrines, now termed Calvinistic. Leaving Troas he was soon brought to Rome and presented to the Prefect of the city. When led to execution, he was attended by a number of the brethren and permitted to join with them in prayer. He prayed to the Son of God that he would arrest the progress of persecution, and continue the love of the brethren toward each other. He was then conducted to the Amphitheatre, and thrown to the beasts. The beasts were his grave. A few

bones only remained, which the deacons gathered, carefully preserved, and afterward buried at Antioch.

Ambition and the lust of power were not stronger features in the character of Cæsar, than the desire of martyrdom was in that of Ignatius. The prize of martyrdom was before him, and he was unwilling to be deprived of it.

He wrote to the Roman Christians and entreated them to use no arguments for his deliverance. "If you be silent," says he, "in my behalf, I shall be made a partaker of God; but if you love my flesh, I shall again have my course to run. I wrote to the churches, and signified to them all, that I die willingly for God, unless you prevent me. Now I begin to be a disciple, nor shall any thing move me, visible or invisible, that I may enjoy Christ. Let fire and the cross, let the companies of wild beasts, let breaking of bones, and tearing of limbs, let the grinding of the whole body, and all the malice of devils come upon me, only may I enjoy Jesus Christ."

The unaffected charity and humility of Ignatius deserve our particular attention. He alone seemed unconscious of his attainments, while the whole Christian world honored and admired him.

His writings evince the soundness of his sentiments. He writes as follows. "Ignatius to the worthy and happy church at Ephesus. Blessed in the majesty and fullness of God the Father, predestinated before the world to be perpetually permanent in glory, immoveable, united, and elect, in the genuine sufferings by the will of the Father, and of Jesus Christ our God. One physician there is bodily and spiritually, begotten and unbegotten, God appearing in the flesh."

Trajan died in the year 117, and was succeeded by Adrian. It appears, that this Emperor never issued any persecuting edicts. But the iniquity of his predecessor survived; and Adrian's silent acquiescence, for a time, gave sufficient scope to exert itself in acts of dreadful barbarity. The persecution therefore proceeded with sanguinary rigor.

In the mean time, the gospel continued to spread. Many demonstrated by their conduct that the spirit which had influenced the Apostles rested on them. Filled with divine charity, they distributed their substance to feed the poor, and travelled into regions, which had never heard the sound of the gospel. Having planted churches, and ordained over them Pastors, they committed to them the culture of the new ground, and passed on themselves to other countries.

Here we cannot but admire the power of divine grace in the production of so pure and charitable a spirit, contrast it with the illiberal selfishness too prevalent even among the best of Christians, and regret how little is done for the propagation of the gospel.

The ancient Christians, were all one body, one church, of one name, and cordially loved one another as brothers.

Attention to real Christianity was not dissipated by schismatic peculiarities; nor the body of Christ rent in pieces by factions. There were indeed heretics; but real Christians admitted them not into their communities. The line of distinction was drawn with precision; and a dislike, to the person and offices of Christ, and of the real spirit of holiness, discriminated the heretics. Separation from them, while it was undoubtedly the best mark of charity to their souls, tended to preserve the faith and love of true Christians in genuine purity.

The persecution of the Christians raged with awful severity till Quadratus, Bishop of Athens, and Aristides a certain Christian writer of the same place, presented apologies to the emperor, defending the gospel from the calumnies of its enemies. They had their desired effect. The good sense of the emperor was roused to do justice to his innocent subjects; and accordingly, he prohibited his officers putting to death Christians, unless proved guilty of immorality.

But the same equitable rule of government, which forbade Adrian to punish the Christians, led him to be very severe against the Jews. At this time appeared Barchochebās, who pretended to be the star, prophesied of by Balaam. This miserable people, who had rejected the true Christ, received the imposter with open arms, and were induced by him to commit the most horrid crimes, and to exercise great cruelty towards the Christians.

The issue of the rebellion, was the entire exclusion of the Jews from the city and territory of Jerusalem. This leads us to consider, how the mother church at Jerusalem was affected by this revolution. Previously to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, the Christian Jews, as has been observed, retired to Pella, a little town beyond Jordan. How long they continued there is uncertain. They must, however, have returned before Adrian's time, who, coming to Jerusalem forty-seven years after its destruction, found there a few houses and a little church built on Mount Zion. Here the Christians of Jerusalem kept their solemn assemblies; and seemed to have acquired a splendid accession, by the conversion of Aquilla, the emperor's kinsman. But the revolution under Adrian, at length, put a total end to the Jewish church, by the extirpation and banishment of that people.

Adrian, after a reign of twenty-one years, was succeeded by Antoninus Pius. He appears always to have been, at least in his own personal character and intentions, guiltless of the blood of Christians. The enemies of religion found it difficult to support their persecuting spirit, till the abominations of heretics, whom malice and ignorance will ever confound with real Christians, furnished them with some plausible pretence.

It pleased God, at this time, to endue a few Christians with the power of defending the truth by the manly arms of rational arguments. Justin Martyr presented his first apology to the emperor Antoninus

Pius, in the third year of his reign ; and the information and arguments, it contained, were not without effect. Antoninus was a man of sense and humanity, open to conviction, and desirous of doing justice to all mankind.

Asia was still the scene of vital Christianity and of cruel persecution. Hence the Christians of that place applied to Antoninus, complaining of the many injuries, which they had sustained from the people of the country, who laid to their charge the earthquakes, which had recently happened. These greatly terrified the Pagans, who ascribed them to the vengeance of heaven against the Christians. The emperor, therefore, sent the following edict to the common council of Asia. "I am quite of opinion, that the gods will take care to punish such persons. For it much more concerns them to punish those, who refuse to worship them, than it does you, if they be able. But you harass, and vex them, and accuse them of atheism, and other crimes which you can, by no means, prove. To them it appears an advantage to die for their religion, and they gain their point, while they throw away their lives, rather than comply with your injunctions. As to the earthquakes, which have happened in past times, is it not proper to remind you of your own despondency, when they happen ; to desire you to compare your spirit with theirs, and observe how serenely they confide in God ? in such seasons, you seem to be ignorant of the gods, and neglect their worship, and yet live in the practical ignorance of the supreme God himself ; and you harass and persecute to death, those who do worship him."

This edict, Eusebius informs us, was carried into execution. Nor did the emperor content himself merely with this. He issued similar ones throughout the empire. Such vigorous measures must have designed effect ; and we may safely conclude

that during a great part of this emperor's reign, which was twenty-three years, the Christians were permitted to worship God in peace.

From the edict of Antoninus Pius, it appears, that there was a large body of men, devoted to the service of God, ready to die for his name, rather than renounce it ; that they had a sincere reverence for the supreme Being, an unaffected contempt of death, and a serenity of mind under the most pressing dangers.

This divine religion, about which there was so much contention, comprehends every good thing, which can possibly be found in all other religions, has excellencies peculiar to itself, affords a fund of consolation, and an energy of support under the prospects of death, and points out the only safe and sure road to a blissful immortality.

Marcus Antoninus succeeded Antoninus Pius, in the year 161, and, immediately upon his coming to the throne, rekindled the flames of persecution against the Christians. During his whole reign, which continued nineteen years, he remained their implacable enemy ; and allowed and encouraged the most barbarous treatment towards them.

During this reign, many eminent Christians suffered martyrdom. Among the number, was Justin Martyr. This great man was born at Neapolis, in Samaria. In his youth he travelled for the improvement of his mind. At Alexandria, he enjoyed all the literary entertainment, which an inquisitive mind could derive from fashionable studies.

The Stoicks, at first, appeared to him the masters of happiness. But finding that he could learn nothing from them respecting God, he gave himself up to retirement. In one of his retired walks, he met with an aged man, whose conversation was the means of his conversion. From this period till his death, he was a distinguished champion of the cross of Christ.

He acknowledged, that the Christian religion possessed a formidable majesty in its nature, adapted to terrify transgressors, as well as a sweetness, peace and serenity, for such as are experimentally acquainted with its power.

Having succeeded in his first *Apology* to Antoninus Pius, Justin now presented a second to Marcus Antoninus Philosophus. This he did, with an expectation of softening his mind toward the Christians, as he had done that of his predecessor. But in vain; his unrelenting heart could not be softened even by the powerful reasonings of Justin.

He and several others, were seized, committed to prison, and having boldly affirmed their belief in the Christian religion, were whipped and afterward beheaded. Thus slept in Jesus, Justin the Christian philosopher, in the year 163.

Justin was the first character, subsequent to the Apostles, who added, to an unquestionable zeal and love for the gospel, the character of a man of learning and philosophy. He examined the various philosophic sects, not for the purpose of amusement and ostentation, but to find out God, and in God true happiness. He tried, and he found them all wanting. He then sought God in the gospel; and there he found him, confessed him, gave up every thing for him, was satisfied with his choice, and died in serenity.

His house was open for the instruction of all, who consulted him, though he seems never to have assumed the ecclesiastical character.

It is certain, that Justin worshipped Christ as the true God, in the full and proper sense of the word. And from his writings, we learn, that the great body of Christians, in the second century, held the proper Deity of Jesus Christ.

Another distinguished character, that suffered martyrdom during the persecution of Marcus ~~Ar~~ was Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna.

He had been familiarly conversant with the Apostles, and received the government of the church from those who had been eye witnesses and ministers of our Lord. He suffered martyrdom in the year 167, having labored in the vineyard of Christ more than seventy years.

Being at Rome at the time the heresy of Marcion was prevalent in that city, he zealously and successfully bore testimony against it. These heretics held that Christ had no real manhood, rejected the Old Testament, and mutilated the New. But it was not in their power to undermine the authority of this venerable Asiatic. To procure a seeming coalition, was all that Marcion could expect. Meeting Polycarp one day in the street, he called out to him, "Polycarp, own us." "I do own thee," said the zealous Bishop, "to be the first born of Satan."

We have only a short account of the life of Polycarp; but there is a letter extant, written in the name of his church, in which we have a particular account of his death, and of others who suffered with him.

Of the martyrs, they say, "Doubtless their magnanimity, their patience, their love of the Lord, deserve the admiration of every one, who, though torn with whips till the frame and structure of their bodies were laid open, even to their veins and arteries, yet weekly endured; so that those, who stood around, pitied them and lamented. But such was their fortitude, that none uttered a sigh or a groan, evincing to us all, that at that hour the martyrs of Christ, though tormented, were absent as it were from the body; or rather, that the Lord being present conversed familiarly with them; and they, supposing the race of Christ, despised the torments of one hour, redeeming themselves from punishment. And the fire of savage fury to them; for they had, steadily

a desire to avoid that fire, which is eternal, and never to be quenched."

Polycarp, hearing of the distressing scenes transacted in Smyrna, remained unmoved; but through the entreaties of his people, he retired to a village not far from the city. The persecutors went in pursuit of him, and having seized one of his servants, compelled him, by torture, to confess the place of his master's retreat. Polycarp, being informed that they had arrived to apprehend him, replied with great composure, "The will of the Lord be done." He immediately presented himself before them; conversed with them, ordered meat and drink to be placed before them, and then requested an hour to pray without molestation. His request being granted, he prayed two hours, to the astonishment of all who heard him. So heavenly was his appearance, that many of his persecutors repented that they had come to apprehend him. When he had ceased praying, they set him on an ass and conducted him to Smyrna. By means of blows and other cruel treatment, they endeavored to persuade him to renounce Christ. The proconsul addressing him, said, "Reproach Christ, and swear by the fortune of Cæsar, and I will release you." Polycarp replied, "Eighty-six years have I served Christ, and he has never wronged me; how can I blaspheme my King who has saved me?" Another, threatening, says, "I will tame your spirit with fire, unless you repent." "You threaten me with fire," replied Polycarp, "which burns for a moment, but are ignorant of the future judgment, and the fire of eternal punishment reserved for the ungodly." It being then proclaimed in the city, that Polycarp had professed himself a Christian; they unanimously exclaimed "he shall be burnt alive." Fuel was immediately collected, and he being bound, and the usual appendages of burning placed about him, he prayed aloud, and was filled with such con-

fidence, that joy and grace evidently shone in his countenance. Having distinctly pronounced 'Amen,' the fire was kindled; but not immediately affecting him, a sword was plunged into his body, and he thrown into the fire, and consumed. Nothing remained but his bones, over which his friends wept and rejoiced.

Let those who are content with a cold rationality in religion, ask themselves, how they could endure what Polycarp did; and whether that, which is falsely called enthusiasm, be not really and solidly divine.

The flame of Antoninus' persecution, which consumed Ignatius and Polycarp, was not confined to Asia, but extended to France, and Germany, and raged with dreadful fury in the cities of Vienna, and Lyons.

The sufferings which the Christians here endured, surpass the power of language. Every torture, which the rage of men and devils could invent, was inflicted upon them. "We are not competent," say the writers of these events, "to describe, with accuracy, nor is it in our power to express the greatness of the affliction sustained here by the saints, the intense animosity of the Heathen against them, and the complicated sufferings of the blessed martyrs. The grand enemy attacked us with all his power; and in his first assault, exhibited intentions of exercising malice without limits and without control. But the grace of God fought for us, preserving the weak and exposing the strong; who, like pillars, were able to withstand him with patience, and to draw the whole fury of the wicked against themselves. The first attack upon the Christians, was from the people at large. Shouts, blows, the dragging of their bodies, the plundering of their goods, casting of stones, and the confining of them within their own houses, and all the indignities of a fierce and outrageous multitude were magnanimously sustained."

A particular account, of the sufferings of a few, must serve as a specimen for the whole.

One Sanctus, a deacon of Vienna, sustained, in a manner more than human, the most barbarous indignities ; and while the impious vainly hoped to extort from him something injurious to the gospel, to every interrogation he answered, “ I am a Christian.” This, he said, was to him both name, and state, and race, and every thing ; and nothing else could the Heathen draw from him. Hence the indignation of the governor was excited, and he was tortured with the most unrelenting fury. Having exhausted all their usual methods, the barbarians at last, scorched his body by fixing brazen plates to its most tender parts. Still he remained inflexible, firm in his confession—being bedewed with the refreshing waters that flow from the fountain of heavenly consolation. His body witnessed, indeed, the ghastly tortures which he had sustained, being one continued wound and bruise ; altogether contracted, and no longer retaining the form of a human creature. These cruelties he endured with such patience and fortitude, as to confound his enemies, and evince to Christians, that nothing is to be feared, where the love of the Father is found, nothing is painful, where the glory of Christ is exhibited, nothing is sorrowful, where the Holy Ghost distils its heavenly rejoicings.

After some days, the persecutors renewed his tortures, imagining, that a fresh application of the same methods of punishment to his wounds, now swollen and inflamed, must either overcome his constancy, or, by despatching him on the spot, strike a terror to the rest. This was so far from being the case, that contrary to all expectation, his body recovered its natural position in the second course of torture ; he was restored to his former shape and the use of his limbs ; so that, by the grace of Christ, it proved not a punishment, but a cure. After a few days, he underwent another course of tortures ; during which he remained firm in the faith, and not a word could be extorted

from him besides his first confession. Having sustained the rage of his tormentors for many days, he at length expired in full prospect of a glorious immortality.

Females, at this time, distinguished themselves by a patient course of suffering. One, by the name of Blandina, being tied to a stake, was, for a considerable time, exposed to the wild beasts. The Heathen then commanded her to swear by their idols. On refusing, her tortures were aggravated by all sorts of methods, and the whole round of barbarity was inflicted. But menaces and punishments were equally ineffectual.— Having with the greatest patience and fortitude endured stripes, tearing of beasts, and the iron chair, she was finally enclosed in a net and thrown to a wild beast. Being tossed by the animal for some time, she at length, in faith, hope, and Christian triumph, breathed out her soul.

Many others, they tormented to death, in the same cruel manner. And lest any should perform for them funeral rites, they collected the relics of their bodies, and preserved them for a number of days, by a military guard. They then burnt them, and scattered their ashes into the Rhine ; imagining that by this means, they should prevent their resurrection. “ Now let us see,” they triumphantly said, “ if they will rise again, and if their God can help them and deliver them out of our hands.”

The power of divine grace, in the church at Lyons, appears little less than apostolical. We are constrained to observe the difference between primitive Christianity, and that affectation of rational divinity too prevalent at the present day. Christ’s kingdom, in the narrative before us, appears spiritual and divine.— Christians are humble, meek, heavenly minded, patient under sufferings, and continually sustained with aid invisible.

While we are led to admire the wisdom and goodness of God in preserving the great body of professed Christians, during this century; firm in the faith, purity, and order of the gospel, we have to lament the continuance of heretical sentiments. The same opposition to the Divinity of Christ, and the same insidious methods of depreciating and abusing the doctrines of grace, continued in this century, which discolored the appearance of the church in the first. There was, however, this difference ; they were now multiplied, varied, complicated, and refined by endless subtleties and fancies. Like spots in the sun, they vanished from time to time, and then revived again, in different forms, and under different circumstances.

Many in this period, attempted to incorporate philosophy with Christianity, and contended, that all religions, whether vulgar or philosophical, Grecian, Barbarian, Jewish, or Gentile, meant essentially the same thing. By allegorizing and subtilizing various fables and systems, they pretended to form a coalition of all sects and religions, and endeavored to persuade men to look upon the Jew, the philosopher, the vulgar Pagan, and the Christian, as believing, essentially, the same creed. But not one of the heretics of this century was able to create a strong and permanent interest ; and through the abounding grace of God the church preserved itself distinct, and maintained its discipline with apostolic purity.

CENTURY III.

CHAP. I.

CHRISTIAN AUTHORS OF THIS CENTURY.

BEFORE we proceed to the orderly course of events in this century, we shall give some account of authors, belonging to the last century, who died not far from the commencement of this. We meet with four celebrated men of this description, Irenæus, Tertullian, Pantænus, and Clemens of Alexandria.

The place of Irenæus' birth is uncertain. His name, however, points him out to be a Grecian. His instructors in Christianity were Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, and the renowned Polycarp.

In the year 169 he succeeded Pothinus in the Bishöpic of Lyons. Never did a pastor endure greater trials. Violent persecution without, and subtle heresies within, called for the exertion of consummate dexterity, and magnanimous resolution. Irenæus possessed a large share of both, which enabled him bravely to endure the storm. But heresy proved a more constant enemy, than persecution. Its multiplication in endless refinements, induced him to issue a publication, in which he confuted the heretics.

Having, for nearly forty years, advocated the cause of truth, and endured innumerable conflicts and sufferings, he was finally put to death under the persecution of Severus. So great was the number of martyrs, at this time, that the streets of Lyons flowed with the blood of Christians.

Irenæus, like Justin. Martyr, appears to have obscured some of the doctrines of the gospel, by incor-

porating with them philosophy and human inventions. But in the great and essential points, he was full, scriptural, and explicit.

His writings afford a valuable testimony to the influences of the Holy Spirit, and to the native energy of divine truth on the hearts of illiterate men.

TERTULLIAN.

We shall now have occasion to advert to the state of Christianity in the Roman province of Africa.— This whole region, once the scene of Carthaginian greatness, abounded with Christians in the second century. . But of the means, by which the gospel was there first introduced, and the proceedings of the first planters, we have no account.

In the latter part of the second century, and in the beginning of the third, flourished in Carthage the famous Tertullian, the first Latin author in the church, whose writings have been transmitted to posterity.— Were it not for some light, which he throws on the state of Christianity at this early period, he would not deserve particular notice. It is highly probable, that superstition and the subtle spirit of self-righteousness, had taken deep root in the African churches at this time ; otherwise, Tertullian's writings would not have rendered him so popular among them.

The Montanists, a sect noted for their extreme austerities, and uncommon enthusiasm, seduced the severe Tertullian. He not only joined them, but wrote in their defence, and treated the whole body of Christians, from whom he separated, with the utmost contempt. Error, however, is very inconstant. He soon deserted the Montanists, and established a sect of his own, called Tertullianists, which continued in Africa till the time of Augustine ; by whose labors they were, as a sect, annihilated. But it belongs not to us to condemn a man as irreligious, who certainly

honored the cause of Christ, defended some of the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, laboriously exerted himself to support what he considered true religion, and ever seemed desirous to serve God.

Tertullian declared his full belief in the personality and divinity of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; and observes that the doctrine of the Trinity obtained, from the beginning of the Gospel, antecedent to all heresy. From his writings we may form some idea of the faith, purity, heavenly mindedness, and patience under sufferings, for which the primitive Christians were renowned.

“While our hands,” he says, “are stretched out unto God, let crosses suspend us, let fire consume us, let swords pierce us, let wild beasts trample upon us, we have nothing to fear; a praying Christian is in a frame to endure every thing.”

PANTÆNUS.

One of the most respectable cities, within the precincts of the Roman empire, was Alexandria, the metropolis of Egypt. The gospel was planted here by St. Mark. Of the first Pastors of this church, and of the work of God among them, we have no account. Our first distinct information presents the church in an inauspicious light. The Platonic Philosophers who ruled the taste of the city, and piqued themselves on their erudition, exceedingly corrupted the gospel, by combining with it human inventions.

It is believed that from the time of St. Mark, a Christian cathechetical school was maintained here. Whether it were so or not, Pantænus was the first master of it, of whom we have any account. He was probably a Jew, and much attached to the sentiments of the Stoics; and by combining their doctrines with Christianity, he exceedingly corrupted it. For ten years he laboriously discharged the office of a reli-

gious instructor; and though his philosophical errors cast a shade over his character, it appears, that he taught the essential doctrines of the gospel, and was a real follower of Christ.

From Alexandria he was sent to India to preach the gospel, and there endured innumerable hardships. Of the particular success of his labors, we have no account. He returned to Egypt, resumed his office as a catechist, and died soon after the commencement of the third century.

CLEMENS OF ALEXANDRIA.

Clemens was a scholar of Pantænus, and of the same philosophical cast of mind.

He succeeded his master in the catechetical school, and finally was appointed presbyter in the church of Alexandria. During the persecution of Severus he retired into the East, and formed a peculiar intimacy with Alexander, Bishop of Jerusalem. From Jerusalem he went to Antioch and afterwards returned to his charge at Alexandria. The time of his death is uncertain.

A few quotations from his writings will evince his belief in the fundamental doctrines of grace.

“Jesus Christ, who from all eternity was the Word of God, always had a compassionate tenderness for men; and at last took their nature upon him, to free them from the slavery of demons; to open the eyes of the blind, unstopp the ears of the deaf, to guide their feet in the ways of righteousness, to deliver them from death and hell, and to bestow upon them everlasting life.” “Eternal salvation,” he says, “cannot otherwise be expected, and eternal torments cannot otherwise be avoided, than by believing in Jesus Christ, and living conformably to his laws.” “God made himself man, to teach men to be like unto God. Believe, therefore, in one God, who is God and man, and receive eternal salvation as a reward. Seek God, and you shall live forever.”

CHAP. II.

GENERAL STATE OF THE CHURCH IN THE THIRD CENTURY, AND THE LIFE OF CYPRIAN.

This century commenced during the reign of Severus, a most virulent persecutor of the Christians. It was under his reign and by his authority, that the streets of Lyons at the close of the last century, flowed with the blood of Christians.

Through the influence and kindness of one Proculus, he for a number of years treated the Christians with lenity. But in the tenth year of his reign, A. D. 202, his native ferocity burst out afresh, and a severe storm of persecution was raised against the church.

Severus had just returned victorious from an expedition into the East, and in the pride of prosperity, he was induced to forbid the propagation of the gospel. Christians still believed it right to obey God rather than man. Of course the persecution raged, with dreadful violence, throughout the Roman empire, and particularly at Alexandria. From various parts of Egypt, Christians were brought to this city and executed for the faith of Jesus. Among this number was Leonidas, father of the famous Origen. Multitudes now suffered martyrdom, and young Origen panted for the honor, and needlessly exposed himself to danger. His mother, at first, attempted to check his imprudent zeal by earnest entreaties; but perceiving that he was still determined on suffering with his father, who was closely confined, she then exercised her authority by confining him to the house, and concealing from him his apparel. The vehement spirit of Origen, when he could do nothing else, prompted him to address a letter to his father, in which he thus exhorts him. "Father, faint not, and do not be con-

cerned on our account." He had been carefully instructed in the study of the Scriptures, under the inspection of his pious father. His penetrating genius led him carefully to investigate the sense of Scripture, and to propose questions to his father, which were beyond his ability to solve.

We seem to discover in the very beginning of Origen, the foundation of that presumptuous spirit, which, finally led him to philosophize so dangerously on the Christian religion. Never content with plain truth, he looked for something singular and extraordinary; though, it must be acknowledged, that his sincere desire of serving God appeared from early life.

His father dying a martyr, he was left an orphan at the age of seventeen. He then vigorously applied himself to the improvement of his understanding; and having, as it seems, acquired all the learning his masters could give him, he undertook the business of catechising at Alexandria.

In the heat of the persecution, he distinguished himself by his attachment to the martyrs, visited those, who were fettered in deep dungeons, was present with them after their condemnation, attended them to the place of execution, openly embracing and saluting them. As the persecution daily increased, it seemed impossible, humanly speaking, for Origen to escape. He could no longer pass in safety through the streets of Alexandria, often exchanged lodgings, and was every where pursued; yet his instructions were the means of great good, and his zeal incited numbers to attend to Christianity.

The charge of the school at Alexandria was now committed to him alone. He converted it wholly into a school of religious instruction, maintaining himself by the sale of the profane books, which he had formerly studied. Not only the day, but the greater part of the night was devoted to religious improvements; and he conscientiously practised, with literal

exactness, our Lord's injunctions of not having two coats, nor shoes, nor providing for futurity. He was familiar with cold, nakedness and poverty; refused to receive the gratuities of friends, and was so abstemious as to endanger his life. Thus he lived, for many years, an amazing monument of industry and self-denial. Many imitated his excessive austerities, and some of his followers suffered martyrdom.

A number of persons, at Carthage, were seized during this persecution. Among them was Vivia Perpetua, a lady of quality. Her father, who was a Pagan, went to his daughter, tenderly embraced her, fell upon his knees before her, entreated her to have pity on her infant son, have pity on her aged father, renounce Christianity, and live. Though torn with filial affection, she could afford him no consolation, but simply to wish him to acquiesce in the divine will.

They were all examined, and having affirmed their faith in Jesus, they were added to the long list of martyrs, and received their everlasting reward.

The power of God appeared evidently displayed, during the course of this dreadful persecution, in the sudden and wonderful conversions of several persons, who voluntarily suffered death for that doctrine which they before detested.

Severus extended the persecution to Gaul, at which time, Irenæus and many others suffered; and the streets of Lyons were once more stained with the blood of martyrs.

In the year 211 this tyrant, after a reign of eighteen years, was called to render up his final account. His son and successor was Caracalla. Though he was a monster of wickedness, yet, owing to some prejudice of education, he had a predilection in favor of the Christians, and suffered the church to enjoy a season of tranquility. During the seven years and six months in which he reigned, the Christians found him a friend and protector. If we except the short and turbulent

interval of Maximinus, this calm of the church continued thirty-eight years.

In the year 214 Macrinus succeeded Caracalla, and reigned only one year. He was succeeded by Heliogabalus, who was slain after having swayed the sceptre three years and nine months. His follies and vices are infamous; yet he was favorably inclined towards the Christians. He was succeeded by his cousin Alexander, who was one of the best moral characters in profane history. He countenanced the Christians; and the providence of God, not only secured his church from suffering, but provided for it a favorable patron.

In the year 235 Alexander was murdered, and his murderer usurped the empire. His malice against the house of Alexander induced him to persecute the Christians. But the tyrant's reign lasted only two years; in which time the rest of the world tasted his ferocity as much as the Christians. His persecutions were local and his cruelties to all mankind insatiable.

After two or three revolutions in government, Philip, an Arabian, having murdered Gordian, succeeded to the empire. He began to reign in the year 244. Eusebius tells us, that he was a Christian. But he was only so by profession. He enjoyed the fruit of his crimes five years; he was then slain, and succeeded by Decius.

During the reigns of these two last mentioned emperors, Origen was very conspicuous. He was noticed by the great, the good and the learned. His name was sounded through the world as a man of superior abilities and acquirements. These were united with much ambition, and a boundless curiosity.

A little before the death of Decius, Cyprian was chosen Bishop of Carthage. After the fatigue of tracing the glimmerings of piety through this declining period, it will not be amiss to recreate ourselves with the contemplation of a character, which exhibits the sunshine of vital godliness.

Cyprian was professor of oratory in the city of Carthage ; and was a man of wealth, quality, and dignity. His conversion was not far from the year 246. The whole scene of his Christian life was only thirteen years. But God can do great things in a short time. He seems to have been led on, with vast rapidity, by the effectual operation of the Holy Spirit, and happily, in a great measure, at least, to have escaped the shoals and quicksands of false learning and self conceit. There appeared in Cyprian a spirit, at once, so simple, so zealous, and so intelligent, that in two years after his conversion he was chosen Bishop of Carthage. It was no feigned virtue, that raised him thus in the opinion of mankind. The love of Christ evidently preponderated in him, in opposition to all secular considerations. The widow, the orphan, and the poor, found in him a sympathizing benefactor, and an unfailing friend. With painful emotions, he perceived the designs of the people to choose him Bishop. He retired to avoid their solicitations ; but his house was besieged ; and he at length yielded to accept the painful pre-eminence.

A few extracts from his letters will shew the reality of his conversion.

“While I lay in darkness and the night of Paganism, and when I fluctuated, uncertain and dubious, with wandering steps in the sea of a tempestuous age, ignorant of my own life, alienated from light and truth, it appeared to me, a harsh and difficult thing, that a man should be born again ; and that, being animated with the love of regeneration by a new life, he should strip himself of what he was before ; though the body remained the same, he should, in his mind become altogether a new creature. How can so great a change be possible, said I, that a man should suddenly, and at once, put off what nature and habit have confirmed in him ? But after the filth of my former sins had been washed in the laver of regeneration, and divine light,

from above, infused itself into my heart ; after the Holy Spirit from heaven had made me a new creature, immediately and in a surprising manner, dubious things began to be cleared up, things once shut to be opened, and dark things to shine forth."

"If you keep the road of innocence and righteousness, if you walk with footsteps that do not slide, if hanging with all your heart, and all your might on God, you be only what you have begun to be, you then find, that according to the proportion of faith, so will your attainments and enjoyments be. The Holy Spirit, poured forth profusely, is confined by no limits, is restrained by no barriers ; he flows perpetually ; he bestows in rich abundance."

The reader will discover in the account here given, that the essential doctrines of justification and regeneration were not only believed, but experienced by this zealous African.

While Cyprian was laboring to recover the spirit of godliness among the African churches, Philip was slain, and succeeded by Decius. His enmity toward the former emperor, together with his Pagan prejudices, conspired to bring on the most dreadful persecution the church had experienced.

Previous to this, a general declension from the spirit of Christianity had taken place. This declension was the most conspicuous about the middle of the third century, and was the first since the days of the Apostles.

In such a situation, it was not to be expected that Cyprian's people would, in general, stand their ground ; avarice had taken such deep root among them, that vast numbers immediately lapsed into idolatry. Even before they were accused of being Christians, many ran to the forum, and sacrificed to the gods to prove themselves heathen.

At Rome the persecution raged with unremitting violence ; and the flame continued to spread till the whole of Christendom was in one general conflagration.

Carthage soon became an unsafe place even to Cyprian himself. He knew the liberty which his divine Master had given to his people, of fleeing, when they were persecuted in one city, to another. He seems scarcely to have thought it lawful to do otherwise ; and therefore, retired to some secret place, where he continued safe from the arm of persecution during two years. He was, however, never more active, than during his retreat. Nothing, of moment, occurred in ecclesiastical affairs, either in Africa or Italy, with which he was not acquainted ; and his counsels, under God, were of the greatest influence in both countries.

During his retreat, Cyprian wrote repeatedly to the clergy at Carthage ; in which we see a primitive Pastor full of charity and meekness, zeal and prudence. He evinces the deep knowledge which he had of the depravity of the heart, shews the importance of good discipline in the church, and the danger of pride and self-exaltation. He exhorts them to breathe out their souls to God in fastings, tears, and every method of supplication “ Let us knock,” said he, “ because to him that knocketh it shall be opened, if only prayers, groans, and tears beat the doors. If the Lord see us humble and quiet, lovingly united, and corrected by the present tribulation, he will deliver us.”

The persecution of Carthage appeared very dreadful ; but mostly so, on account of the number of apostates. But in Cyprian and a few other Christians, faith, patience and magnanimity, appeared in full exercise.

The persecutors endeavored to lessen the number of Christians, by banishing those who had confessed Christ ; but this not answering their purpose, they proceeded to cruel torments. Cyprian, hearing that some had expired under their sufferings, and that others were still in prison, wrote to the latter an epistle full of encouragement and consolation. Their limbs had been cruelly mangled, and torn, and appeared like one continu-

ed wound, yet they remained firm in the faith and love of Jesus.

So keenly was the mind of Cyprian set on heavenly things, and so completely lifted above the world, that he ardently exulted, and triumphed in those scenes of horror. He describes the martyrs and their confessors as wiping away the tears of the church, while she was bewailing the ruin of her sons. Even Christ himself, he describes, as looking down with complacency, fighting and conquering in his servants, giving to believers as much strength as they have faith to bear.

The joy of Cyprian on account of the faithfulness of the martyrs, must have been considerably damped, by the disorderly conduct which began to take place in his absence. The lapsed Christians offered themselves to the presbyters of Carthage, who admitted them to the Lord's supper, without evidence of their repentance. Other circumstances evince, that a spirit extremely dangerous to piety, humility, and wholesome discipline, was spreading fast in the African churches.

Cyprian wrote to the lapsed, rebuking the precipitancy of some, and commanding the modesty of others.

The Roman clergy wrote a letter of condolence to Cyprian. They also wrote to the lapsed, giving them the most wholesome advice. And in truth, their whole conduct reflects the highest honor on their wisdom and charity ; and affords the most pleasing proofs of the good state of the church at Rome, at that time.

In addition to the evils already mentioned, Providence now saw fit to exercise the mind of Cyprian with another calamity ; the rise of a schism. One of the most turbulent characters, at this time, was Novatian. Having stirred up a general indignation against the Bishops in Africa, for their severity to the lapsed, he went to Rome, and there supported a party, who complained of too much lenity ; and defended the two extremes with equal pertinacity and success. At Rome

he obtained the office of a Bishop, and was ordained, in a very regular manner. Thus was formed a body of Christians, who separated themselves from the general church, not on account of doctrine, but discipline.

At length the persecution subsided, and Cyprian ventured out of his retreat and returned to Carthage.

It was not the cessation of malice, but the distraction of public affairs, which put an end to the persecution of Decius. The incursions of the Goths obliged him to leave Rome, and God gave a breathing time to his servants.

On Cyprian's return, a council was held at Carthage, for the purpose of settling the confused state of the church. The case of the lapsed was determined, and with men who feared God, it was no hard matter to adjudge a due medium ; the case of dubious characters was deferred ; yet every method of Christian charity was used to facilitate their restoration. Carthage assumed a new aspect, and the church in that place, was purified, strengthened, and enlarged.

Schismatical innovations had occasioned serious difficulties at Rome. Cyprian assisted in removing these difficulties, and a good degree of union was restored.

Decius lost his life in battle in the year 251, having reigned two years and six months. His successor was Gallus, who for a short time allowed peace to the churches.

THE EFFECTS OF DECIUS' PERSECUTION IN THE EASTERN CHURCH.

The Eastern and Western churches were, at this time, divided by the Greek and Roman language ; though cemented by the common bond of the Roman government, and much more by the common salvation.

The Gentile church at Jerusaiem, still maintained its respectability under Alexander its Bishop. But he was finally cast into prison, and breathed out his soul under confinement.

In this persecution, the renowned Origen suffered the most unrelenting cruelty. Bonds, torments, a dungeon, the pressure of an iron chair, the distention of his feet for many days, the threats of burning and other evils, he endured with Christian fortitude. "What words he uttered on these occasions, and how useful to those, who need consolation, many of his epistles," says Eusebius, "declare with no less truth, than accuracy." Were they now extant, more light might probably be thrown on the internal character of Origen, in respect to experimental godliness, than is done by all his works, which remain. These shew the scholar, the philosopher, and the critic. Those would have shown the Christian. This great man died at the age of seventy, near the year 251.

Dionysius was, at this time, Bishop of Alexandria, a person of great and deserved renown in the church. Decius sent an officer, with orders, to apprehend him. But he providentially failed, in his attempt to find him; and thus, in a very remarkable manner, was this useful life preserved to the church.

Under the persecution of Decius, the Christians at Alexandria were threatened with utter destruction. The edict against them appeared so dreadful as to overcome, if it were possible, the very elect. All were astonished, and many through fear were induced to renounce Christianity. Some approached the unholy altar, pale and trembling, not as though they were going to sacrifice, but to be themselves the victims. They were afraid of death and affrighted at the crime of sacrificing. But the firm and stable pillars of the church, being upheld by the all-strengthening hand of God, and having received vigor and courage correspondent to their unshaken faith, became admirable martyrs of his kingdom. They went to execution with all the marks of exultation, God triumphing in them, and thus preparing them for an immediate entrance into his kingdom. Multitudes fled from their

home, wandering in deserts and mountains, and were there destroyed by famine and thirst, cold and disease, robbers and wild beasts.

Two things are evident from this narrative : First, that the persecution found the Eastern church as unprepared for the storm as the Western. Long peace and prosperity had corrupted both ; and they had forgotten that a Christian's life was that of a stranger.— The Decian persecution was, under God, at once a scourge and an antidote. Secondly, there still remained a competent number, who proved the truth of Christianity, and the power of divine grace accompanying it. The true church was not destroyed, but, like the palm-tree, flourished and triumphed amidst surrounding evils.

Not only Alexandria, but other parts of the Eastern church suffered the greatest violence. Swords, wild beasts, pits, red hot chairs, wheels to stretch the bodies, and talons to tear them, were the instruments in this persecution. Malice and covetousness were deeply set at work during this short but horrible reign ; and the genius of men was never known to have been more deeply engaged, in aiding the savageness of the heart. Life was prolonged in torture, that impatience in suffering might at length effect what surprise and terror could not.

One Maximus of Asia was brought before the proconsul, and having been examined, entreated, and tortured, said, “ These are not torments, which we suffer for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ ; they are wholesome unctions.”

All this time, the persecution raged in Egypt, with unremitting fury. In the lower Thebis there was a young man named Paul, to whom, at fifteen years of age, his parents left a great estate. He was a person of much learning, of a mild temper, and full of the love of God. He had a married sister with whom he lived. Her husband was base enough to design an information against him, in order to obtain his estate.—

Paul having notice of this, retired to the desert mountains, where he waited till the persecution ceased.— Habit, at length made solitude agreeable to him. He found the desert a pleasant retreat, and lived there 90 years. He was, at the time of his retirement, 23 ; and lived to be an 113 years old. This is the first distinct account of a hermit in the Christian church. The increasing spirit of superstition soon produced a number of Pauls. The worst effect of it was, that those, who had only external religion, placed their righteousness in monastic austerities ; and thus, one of the strongest supports of false religion gradually arose in the Christian world.

And here we close the account of the Decian persecution. It cannot be denied, that for thirty months, the prince of darkness had full opportunity to glut his rage. But the Lord meant to chasten and to purify his church, not to destroy. The whole scene is memorable on several accounts. It was not a local or intermitting persecution, but universal ; and must have transmitted great numbers to the regions where sin and pain shall be no more.

The peace of thirty years had corrupted the whole Christian atmosphere. The lightning of the Decian rage refined and cleansed it. No doubt the effects were salutary to the church. Without such a scourge external Christianity might have still spread, and internal have been no more. The survivors had an opportunity to learn what the gospel is, in the faithfulness of the martyrs ; and men were taught again, that he alone, who strengthens Christians to suffer, can make true Christians. Yet the storm proved fatal to a number of individuals who apostatized, and Christianity was cleared of many false friends. Two other evils we have also seen. The formation of schisms, and of superstitious solitude, which had their date from the Decian persecution.

Though Gallus, the successor of Decius, allowed the church a short calm, he soon began to disturb its peace,

though not with the incessant fury of his predecessor. From Cyprian's letter to Cornelius, it is evident that the persecution was severe, and that the Roman Christians bore it with the most exemplary fortitude. In another letter, he arms the minds of the Christians against the discouragements, which the circumstances of approaching persecution, are apt to excite. " Whenever any one of the brethren shall be separated from the flock, let him not be moved at the horror of the flight, nor while he retreats and lies hid, be terrified at the solitude of the desert. He is not alone to whom Christ is a companion in flight. He is not alone, who, keeping the temple of God wherever he is, is not without God."

Again, he says, " O what a glorious day will come, when the Lord shall begin to recount his people, and to bestow on us the reward of faith and devotedness to him. What glory ! what joy ! to be admitted to see God, to be honored, to partake of the joy of eternal light and salvation with Christ the Lord your God ; to salute Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the Patriarchs, and Prophets, and Apostles, and Martyrs ; to join with the righteous, and the friends of God, in the pleasures of immortality. When that revelation shall come, when the beauty of God shall shine upon us, we shall be as happy, as the deserters and rebellious will be miserable in inextinguishable fire." Such are the views of the next life which Cyprian sets before Christians.— The palm of heavenly mindedness belonged to these persecuted saints.

But to return to the history : Cornelius, bishop of Rome, was sent into banishment, and Lucius was chosen in his stead, and suffered death, near the year 252. He was succeeded by Stephen.

The short reign of Gallus was distinguished by a long catalogue of human miseries ; one of which was a dreadful pestilence, which broke out in Africa, daily carried off numberless persons, and swept away wh. The pagans were exceedingly alarmed, r burial of the dead, and violated the dutie

The bodies of many lay in the streets of Carthage, and in vain, seemed to ask the pity of passengers. It was on this occasion that the Lord stirred up the spirit of Christians to shew the practical superiority of their religion, and Cyprian exhibited one of the most brilliant proofs of his real character. He gathered together his people, and expatiated on the subject of mercy. His eloquent voice had its usual effects on their minds.— The Christians ranked themselves into parties ; the rich contributed largely ; the poor gave what they could spare ; and all labored, with extreme hazard of their lives, to mitigate the public calamity. The pagans saw, with admiration, what the love of God in Christ can do ; and beheld, with shame, their own selfishness and inferiority.

This dreadful calamity gave Cyprian an opportunity of pressing on the minds of his people, a warm and active regard for the blessing of immortality, joined with an holy indifference to things below. He published, on this occasion, his short treatise on immortality. He, who wrote it, must have felt, what all need to feel ; how little a thing life is, and how valuable the prospect of heavenly bliss. We can only take a few extracts.

“ The kingdom of God, my dearest brethren, has begun to be just at hand. The reward of life, the joy of eternal salvation, perpetual gladness, and the possession of Paradise lately lost, come to us now as the world passes away ; heavenly things now succeed earthly, great things small, and eternal, those that are fading. What room is there here for anxiety and solicitude ? Who, amidst these things, is sad and disconcerted, unless to whom faith and hope is wanting ? ”

Speaking of death, he says : “ Let that man fear to die, who is not born of water and the Spirit, and is obnoxious to hell ; let them fear to die, who are not partakers of the cross and passion of Christ ; let him fear to die, who is to pass from the first to the second death, whom, receding from the world, eternal flames torment with perpetual punishment ; let him fear to gain by life only a delay of judgment.”

Soon after the appointment of Stephen to the Bish-
opric of Rome, Gallus was slain, after a wretched
reign of eighteen months, in the year 253.

Under Valerian, the successor of Gallus, the church
was allowed a longer truce than in the preceding reign.
For upwards of three years, the people of God found in
him a friend and protector ; his house was filled with
Christians, and he had a strong predilection in their fa-
vor.

The Lord exercises his people in various ways.—
There are virtues adapted to a state of prosperity, as
well as adversity. The wisdom and love of God, which
directed the late terrible persecution, are manifest in
the fruits, which it produced. The face of Africa,
which is now covered with Mahometan, idolatrous, and
piratical wickedness, afforded, in those days, a very
pleasing spectacle. By the fire of persecution it was
cleansed from defilement, and made fruitful in good
works.

During the pacific part of Valerian's reign, in the
year 253, a council was held at Carthage, composed of
sixty-six Bishops, with Cyprian at their head. In this
venerable assembly, a question arose, whether in-
fants should be baptized immediately, or whether
their baptism should be deferred until the eighth day.

Here, in an assembly of sixty-six Pastors, men of
approved fidelity and gravity, who had stood the fiery
trial of some of the severest persecutions ever known,
and who had testified their love to the Lord Jesus
Christ, in a most striking manner, a question is brought,
not whether infants should be baptized at all, as none
contradicted this, but whether it is right to baptize
them immediately, or on the eighth day. To a man
they all determined to baptize them immediately.

A letter from the Bishop of Lyons to Cyprian, shews
that the gospel, which there began so gloriously in the
second century, had spread, in France, to a very con-
siderable degree. The same may be said with re-
gard to the progress of the gospel in Spain.

About this time a controversy arose in the church, which reflects no honor on any of the parties concerned. The question was, whether persons, returning from heresy, should be baptized. Stephen, the Bishop of Rome, and even the venerable Bishop of Carthage, were at variance respecting it. Stephen maintained, that if they were once baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, it was sufficient.—Cyprian maintained, that the baptism of heretics was null and void.

How weak, alas, is man. A peace of three years has set the church in a flame. How soon do we forget that “the kingdom of God is not meat and drink ; but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” With what difficulty is the real love of Jesus, and the fruits of it preserved in the church. All this proves, in the strongest manner, how mighty, and gracious the Lord is, in still preserving a church in the earth ; how dark and corrupt man is, how active and subtle Satan is, how precious is that blood which cleanses from all sin, and how true is that book which contains such salutary doctrine, and so faithfully describes the misery of man ! How safely may its account of the way of salvation be rested on ! How pleasing the prospect it exhibits of the church above !

The change which took place in Valerian, is one of the most remarkable instances of the instability of human characters. More than all his predecessors, he was disposed to exercise kindness toward the Christians. His palace was full of the friends of Jesus, and his house was considered a sanctuary. Having reigned three years, he was induced by his favorite Mærianus to commence a deadly persecution. This man dealt largely in magical enchantments and abominable sacrifices ; he slaughtered children, and scattered the entrails of new born babes. The persecution of Christians was an object, worthy a mind so fascinated with diabolical wickedness and folly. He found, in Valerian, but too ready a disciple. The persecution

began in the year 257, and continued the remainder of his reign, three years and a half.

Cyprian, who had escaped the two preceding persecutions, was made a victim of this. His persecution, however, was attended with circumstances of comparative lenity: He was seized by the servants of Paternus, the proconsul of Carthage, and brought into his council chamber. Having made some ineffectual attempts to work upon his fear, the proconsul pronounced against him the sentence of banishment. The place of his destination was Curubis, a small town fifty miles from Carthage. His situation during the eleven months, he continued there, was rendered comfortable by the kind treatment of the citizens of Curubis, and the repeated visits which he received from Christian friends.

While Cyprian was at Curubis, he heard that the persecutors had seized several Bishops, Priests, Deacons, a great number of the common people, and even children; whom, after beating with sticks, they sent to work in the mines. His sympathizing spirit could not but be with his brethren; and what he felt on this occasion is expressed in the following letter addressed to them. Having expressed much affection for them, and spoken of the glory of martyrdom; he says: "Let malice and cruelty fetter you as they please, quickly you will come from earth and its sorrows, to the kingdom of heaven. In those mines the body is not refreshed by a bed; but Christ is its consolation and trust. Your limbs, fatigued with labor, lie on the ground; but to lie down with Christ is no punishment. Filth and dirt defile your limbs, void of the cleansing bath; but you are inwardly washed from all uncleanness. Your allowance of bread is but scanty; but man doth not live by bread alone, but by the word of God. You have no proper clothes to fence you from the cold; but he, who has put on Christ, is clothed abundantly." He concludes, begging their earnest prayers, that he and they may be freed from th

snares and darkness of the world ; that those, who, in the bonds of love and peace, had stood together against the injuries of heretics, and the pressures of the heathen, might together rejoice in celestial mansions.

The Bishops returned him an answer full of affection and gratitude, in which they acknowledge the pecuniary assistance which Cyprian had afforded them.

In the year 260, Cyprian returned from exile, and lived in a garden, near Carthage, where he regulated the affairs of the church, and distributed to the poor the remnant of his property.

The persecution, after a little interval, broke out afresh. Cyprian was again seized, and brought into the judgment hall. Having commanded him to worship the gods, but finding him inflexible, the proconsul said, "I pity your case, and could wish to consult for your safety :" "I do not wish," said the prelate, "that things should be otherwise with me, than that adoring my God, I may hasten to him with all the ardor of my soul ; for the afflictions of this present world are not to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed." The proconsul, then reddening with anger, commanded him to be put to death. "God be praised," said the martyr ; and while they were leading him away, a multitude of the people followed, and cried, "Let us die with our holy Bishop." They led him to a plain surrounded with trees, where, after worshipping his God, he was beheaded. Thus after a variety of trials and exercises among friends, open enemies, and nominal Christians, by a death, more gentle than commonly fell to the lot of martyrs, he rested in Jesus.

In pursuance of the cruel orders of Valerian, for carrying on the persecution, Sixtus, ^{bishop of} Rome, had been seized with some of the clergy. While they were carrying him to execution, Laurentius, his chief deacon, followed him weeping, and said, "Whither goest thou, father, without thy son ?" Sixtus said, "You shall follow me in three days."

After Sixtus' death, the prefect of Rome, moved by an idle report of the immense riches of the Roman church, sent for Laurentius, and ordered him to deliver them up. Laurentius replied, "Give me a little time to set every thing in order, and to take an account of each particular." The prefect granted him three days time. In this space, Laurentius collected all the poor who were supported by the Roman church, and going to the prefect said, "Come, behold the riches of our God, you shall see a large court full of golden vessels." The prefect followed him; but seeing all the poor people, he turned to Laurentius with looks full of anger. "What are you displeased at?" said the martyr. "The gold, you so eagerly desire, is but a vile metal, taken out of the earth, and serves as an incitement to all sorts of crimes; the true gold is that Light, whose disciples these poor men are. The misery of their bodies is an advantage to their souls; sin is the true disease; the great ones of the earth are the truly poor and contemptible. These are the treasures, which I promised you, to which I will add precious stones. Behold these virgins and widows; they are the church's crown; make use of these riches for the advantage of Rome, of the emperor, and yourself." "Do you mock me?" cries the prefect, "I know, you value yourself for contemning death, and therefore you shall not die at once." He then caused him to be stripped, extended, and fastened to a gridiron, and in that manner to be broiled to death. When he had continued a considerable time on one side, he said, "Let me be turned, I am sufficiently broiled on one side." And when they had turned him, he said, "It is enough." Then looking up to heaven he prayed for the conversion of Rome, and expired.

At Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, a child, named Cyril, showed uncommon fortitude. He called on the name of Jesus Christ continually, nor could threats or b! prevent his owning Christianity. Many childr

his age, persecuted him ; and his own father drove him out of his house, with the applause of many for his zeal in the support of paganism. The judge ordered him to be brought before him, and said, " My child, I will pardon your faults, your father shall receive you again ; it is in your power to enjoy your father's estate, provided you are wise and take care of your own interest." " I rejoice to bear your reproaches," replied the child. " God will receive me ; I am glad that I am expelled out of our house ; I shall have a better mansion. I fear not death, because it will introduce me to a better life." Divine grace having enabled him to witness this good confession, he was ordered to be bound, and led, as it were, to execution. The judge had given secret orders to bring him back again, hoping that the sight of the fire might overcome his resolution. Cyril remained inflexible. The humanity of the judge induced him still to continue his remonstrances. " Your fire, and your sword," said the young martyr, " are insignificant. I go to a better house, and more excellent riches ; despatch me presently, that I may enjoy them." The spectators wept through compassion. " You should rather rejoice," said he, " in conducting me to my punishment. You know not, what a city I am going to inhabit, nor what is my hope." Thus he went to his death, and was the admiration of the whole city.

Dionysius, of Alexandria, whom divine Providence had so remarkably preserved in the Decian persecution, lived to suffer much also in this, but not to death. His epistles throw some light on the effects of Valerian's persecution in Egypt. He says, referring to those who had been seized, " There were men, and women, young and old, soldiers and vulgar persons, of all sorts and ages. Some, after stripes and fire, were crowned victors ; some, immediately by the sword ; and others, after a short and severe torture, became acceptable sacrifices unto the Lord."

Having persecuted the church for three years, Valerian was taken prisoner by Sapor, king of Persia, who detained him the rest of his life, made use of his neck when he mounted his horse, and at length, caused him to be flayed and salted. This event belongs to secular, rather than church history ; but as it is perfectly well attested, it cannot but strike the mind of any one that fears God. Valerian had known and respected the Christians ; his persecution must, therefore, have been a sin against much light ; and it is common for Providence to punish such in a very exemplary manner.

The church was restored to rest after Valerian's captivity. Gallienus, his son and successor, in other respects no reputable emperor, proved a sincere friend to Christians, put a stop to the persecution, and had the condescension to send letters of licence for the Bishops to return to their pastoral charges.

We behold now a new scene ; Christians legally tolerated under Pagan government. The example of Gallienus was followed by succeeding emperors to the end of the century, violated only in one instance, the effect of which was presently dissipated by the hand of Providence. This is not a season for the growth of grace and holiness ; in no time, since the Apostles, was there so great a decay ; nor can we shew much, if any, lively Christianity in all this period.

The greatest luminary in the church at this time was Dionysius of Alexandria. Speaking of the Sabellian heresy, which now made its appearance, he calls it impious doctrine, blasphemy against the Almighty God, infidelity concerning his Son, and senseless ignorance of the Holy Ghost.

On Dionysius' return to Alexandria, he found it involved in civil war, bloodshed, plagues, and diseases. In this season of lamentation and woe, the return of such a Bishop was an unspeakable consolation. Having comforted his people in their afflicted state ; illustrated truth, and opposed the innovations of heresy.

or to discharge them from the service. Many resigned rather than to comply with the idolatrous injunction. A few were put to death on the occasion.

It seems that these preliminaries to the persecution, with which the next century opens, did not affect the minds of Christians in general ; nor was the spirit of prayer stirred up among them ; a certain sign of long and obstinate decay in godliness. But God, who had long exercised patience, declared, at length, in the course of his providence, “Because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shall not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee.”

CHAPTER III.

SOME ACCOUNT OF GREGORY.

GREGORY was born at Neocæsarea, the metropolis of Cappadocia. He travelled to Alexandria to learn the Platonic philosophy, where he was equally remarkable for strictness of life, and close attention to his studies. He then put himself under the tuition of Origen at Cæsarea ; and having continued there five years, returned to Neocæsarea, and devoted himself mostly to prayer and meditation. Neocæsarea was a large and populous city, but full of idolatry, the very seat of Satan. Young Gregory was prevailed on, though with much difficulty, to take the charge of that people.

The undertaking was arduous ; there being only seventeen professors of Christianity in the place. However, Gregory commenced his labors, and continued successfully employed at Neocæsarea, till the persecution of Decius, under which Pontus and Cap-

padocia seem to have had their full share of suffering. Relations, in the most unnatural manner, betrayed one another ; the woods were full of vagabonds ; the towns were empty ; and houses, deprived of their Christian inhabitants, became jails for the reception of prisoners.

In this terrible situation of things, Gregory, fearing that his new converts could not stand their ground and be faithful, advised them to flee ; and to encourage them in it, he set the example. Many of his people suffered greatly ; but God at length restored them in peace ; and Gregory again returned to exhilarate their minds with his pastoral labors.

A little before his death, he made strict inquiry, whether there were any in the city or neighborhood still strangers to Christianity. Being told that there were about seventeen in all, he sighed, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, appealed to God how much it troubled him, that any of his fellow-townspeople should remain unacquainted with salvation. At the same time, he gave thanks, that as at first, he found only seventeen Christians, he had left only seventeen idolaters. Having prayed for the conversion of infidels, and the edification of the faithful, he peacefully resigned his soul to him who gave it.

Gregory was a strict Trinitarian. He speaks of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as a perfect Trinity in glory, eternity, and kingdom ; not separated, not divided.

Gregory was evangelical in his whole life. In his devotion he showed the greatest reverence. *Yea* and *may* were the usual measures of his communication ; no anger nor bitterness proceeded out of his mouth ; slander, and calumny, as directly opposite to Christianity, he peculiarly hated and avoided ; envy and pride he abhorred ; he was zealous against all corruptions ; and Sabellianism, which long after reared its head, was silenced by the remembrance of what he had taught and left among his people.

CHAPTER IV.

PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL IN THIS CENTURY.

During the reign of Decius, even in the midst of the persecution, the gospel, which, in France, had been confined to the neighborhood of Vienna and Lyons, was considerably extended, and that country in general was blessed with the light of the gospel.

Germany, in the course of this century, was also favored with the same blessing, especially those parts of it which were in the neighborhood of France. Of the British Isle, little is recorded.

The goodness of God made the temporal miseries, with which mankind were afflicted in the reign of Gallienus, subservient to the unspeakably more important concerns of their souls. The barbarians, who ravaged Asia, carried with them into captivity several Bishops, who preached the word of life to their cruel oppressors. The barbarians heard with respect and attention, and numbers of them were converted.

CHAPTER V.

CONNEXION BETWEEN THE DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE OF PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANS.

It must not, however fashionable, be admitted by a Christian, that one sentiment is as good as another, with respect to influence on the practice. Scripture connects sanctification with belief of the truth. Our Lord himself prays, that his disciples may be sanctified through the truth. The blood of Christ purges the conscience from dead works, to serve the living God; and a right faith in Jesus overcomes the world.

The peculiar doctrines of the gospel are original sin, justification by the faith of Jesus Christ, his God-

head and atonement, the divinity and efficacious influences of the Holy Ghost. We appeal to Scripture for the truth of this assertion. If it cannot be proved from thence, let it not be proved at all. The tradition of the church, were it more uniform than it is, can never sufficiently demonstrate it.

From the history of the church, during the three first centuries, we learn, first,—That there were a number of persons, bearing the Christian name, whose lives proved them to be the excellent of the earth: And, secondly,—That as far as we know, the character of genuine virtue belonged, exclusively, to those who espoused the peculiar doctrines of the gospel.

Sentiments, when really and thoroughly imbibed, cannot be destitute of practical influence. If there be a favorite topic in Scripture it is the recommendation of humility. The humble, with all their imperfections, must be admitted into heaven; the proud, with all the virtue compatible with pride, must be excluded. Those doctrines, therefore, which support humility, must be divine; those which nourish pride, must be earthly, or even diabolical. Now the evangelical doctrines, just mentioned, are all of the former sort. The more they are relished and admired, the more do they direct the mind to honor God, to feel even infinite obligation to him; to entertain the lowest ideas of ourselves; to confound the pride of intellect, of riches, of virtue, of every thing human. To sing salvation to God and the Lamb, to confess our desert of destruction, and to ascribe our deliverance from it to atoning blood, are the employments of heaven. The taste and temper adapted to it, must be formed here on earth by grace; and the whole work of the Spirit, as we have seen it exemplified in three centuries, is calculated to produce and support these dispositions. In the words and actions of holy men we have seen this effect. They believed, heartily, the truth of doctrines the most humili-

ting. They were poor in spirit, patient under the severest treatment, and the most cruel injuries, because they were conscious of deserving much worse ; contented in the meanest circumstances, because they felt the beauty of his condescension, who, though he was rich, became poor for their sakes, and who had provided for them sure and eternal riches. They were serene and confident in God, because they viewed him as their Father through the grace of Christ ; full of charity, because they knew the love of God in Christ ; in honor they preferred others to themselves, because they were ever conscious of their own depravity ; in fine, they gladly endured reproach for Christ's sake, because they knew his kingdom was not of this world.

Now take from these men the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, and all the motives and springs of Christian action are annihilated. Morals may remain, and whatever is reputable in social life, but that, which is properly of a pious and humble nature, is no more.

For whoever feels himself daily to be helpless, corrupt, and unworthy ; whose hope of divine favor cannot exist for a moment, but under the belief of the most stupendous grace ; who is compelled by the voice of necessity to pray, and who experiences the answer of prayer by repeated supernatural aids, must be induced to the constant exercise of humble thoughts with respect to himself, and of grateful thoughts with respect to his Maker. It is easy to see, what a foundation is laid for meekness, gentleness, modesty, and submission to the will of God, and for genuine compassion for the most wicked and most injurious ; he himself being a child of wrath, by nature, as well as they. Nor is there a virtue, for which the primitive Christians were so renowned, but it may be traced up to these principles.

CENTURY IV.

CHAP. I.

THE PERSECUTION OF DIOCLESIAN.

THE fourth century commenced with the bursting of a storm, which had for some time hung over the church.

Dioclesian, who was then emperor, had a partner called Maximian. Under them were two Cæsars, Galerius and Constantius. Except Constantius, they were all tyrants, though the savageness of Galerius was the most remarkable.

During a whole winter Dioclesian and Galerius were engaged in secret counsels respecting the persecution, formed a plan for extinguishing the gospel, and finally determined on a day for commencing their iniquitous operations. Early in the morning, on the appointed day, an officer, with guards, came to the great church at Nicæmedia, burst open the doors, burnt the Scriptures, tore down the building; and next day edicts were issued, in which men of the Christian religion, were deprived of all honor and dignity, and exposed to torture.

A few days after, the palace was found to be on fire. Christians were charged with the crime; and Dioclesian then thoroughly, and in earnest, raged against all sorts of men, who bore the Christian name; and except France, the persecution pervaded the whole Roman empire.

The officers of Dioclesian were perfectly willing to imbrue their hands in the blood of Christians; and not only willing, but hastened with cruel speed to ex-

ecute his horrid commands. Christians were put to death in a more savage manner than had ever before been heard of. Presbyters and deacons were seized and condemned to death ; eunuchs, of the greatest power in the palace, were slain ; and persons of every age and sex were burnt. It was tedious to destroy men singly ; fires were made to burn numbers together ; and men, with millstones about their necks, were thrown into the sea. Judges were every where at work compelling men to sacrifice. Prisons were filled, and unheard of tortures were invented. Full permission was given for any to injure them. Some beat them with clubs, others with rods ; some scourged them with thongs of leather, others with ropes. Many of the Christians having their hands fastened behind them, were hung about a wooden engine, and every limb of their bodies distended by machines. The whole bodies of some were rent with iron nails, while others, suspended by one hand to a portico, underwent the most severe distention of all their joints. The governor ordered them to be bound with the greatest severity, and when they breathed their last to be dragged on the ground. "No care," said he, "ought to be taken of these Christians ; let all treat them as unworthy of the name of men."

Egypt suffered extremely. Whole families were put to death ; some by fire, others by water, others by decollation, after horrible tortures. Some perished by famine, others by crucifixion, and of these, some in the common manner, others were fastened with their heads downward, and preserved alive, till they died with hunger. These scenes continued many years. Sometimes ten, at other times thirty, and sixty, and once a hundred men and women, with their little ones, were murdered ~~one~~ day, by various tortures.

Wearied at length with torture, and affecting to praise the clemency of the emperors, the persecutors

contented themselves with plucking out eyes, cutting off limbs, and then sending the bereaved sufferers to work in the mines.

The spirit of martyrdom revived with the persecution. Christians suffered with the greatest faith and patience. There was ever the strongest appearance of joy and triumph among them, and to their last breath, they employed themselves in prayer and thanksgiving.

Thus did God, at once, punish the sins of the Christians; revive his work in their hearts, by sanctified affliction; evince the extreme depravity of mankind; and illustrate his own power and wisdom in baffling the rage of Satan, and in defending and delivering his church when every thing seemed combined for its destruction.

These things demonstrate, in the highest manner, the strength of grace, and the reality of that divine influence which attends Christians.

In the year 305 a civil change took place in the empire, which paved the way for very important changes in the churches; Dioclesian resigned the empire and Maximian followed his example. They were succeeded by Galerius and Constantius. Maximian took the place of Galerius, inherited the savageness and the prejudices of his predecessor, and in the eastern provinces still continued the horrors of persecution. We find that at this time, the imprudence of many Christians was great; and their zeal very irregular and extravagant. There were, however, persons well informed of their duty, possessing the mind of Christ. One by the name of Paul, being sentenced to lose his head, begged that a short space of time might be allowed him. His request being granted, he prayed with a loud voice for the whole Christian world, that God would forgive them, remove the very heavy scourge of their iniquities, and restore them to peace and liberty. He then prayed,

the Jews might find access to God through Christ, that the same blessing might be vouchsafed to the Samaritans, and that the Gentiles might be brought to know and serve God. Nor did he omit to mention the crowd about him, the judge who had sentenced him, the emperor, and the executioner ; and in the hearing of all he prayed that their sin might not be laid to their charge. The whole company were moved, and tears were shed. The martyr composed himself to suffer, and, offering his neck to the sword, was beheaded.

For eight years, Christians in the East, with little intermission, continued to groan under this heavy persecution. In the West it subsided, at the expiration of two years.

Providence finally raised up a protector for the church. The emperor Constantius, lying at the point of death, sent for his son Constantine, who came, and according to his father's appointment, succeeded him ; and so far as his power extended, gave perfect toleration to the Christians. Providence enlarged his dominions, and he soon became sole master of the western world.

Galerius, in the year 310, was smitten with an incurable disease. Physicians and idols were applied to in vain ; an intolerable stench spread itself over the palace of Sardis where he resided. He was almost devoured by worms, and continued a year in a situation the most dreadful. Softened at length by his sufferings, he published an edict, in which he prohibited the persecution of Christians, allowed them to rebuild their places of worship, and desired them to pray for his health.

The effects of this new edict, were very perceptible. Prisoners were released, confessors were freed from the mines, the highways were full of Christians, singing psalms and hymns to God, as they returned to their friends ; and Christendom, at length, wore a cheerful aspect. Even Pagans were melted ; and many, who

had joined in the attempt to extinguish the Christian name, began to be convinced that religion, which had sustained such formidable attacks, was divine and invincible.

This calm, however, was of but short duration. Galerius, a few days after his edict, expired ; his body being wholly corrupted.

Syria and Egypt, with their dependencies, remained under Maximian. He treated the Christians of those countries with great malevolence and artifice. No arts were left unemployed to eradicate Christianity from the mind, and educate the next generation in a confirmed aversion to it. Incited by the example of the tyrant, all the pagans in his dominions, exerted themselves to contrive the ruin of Christians ; and human ingenuity was put to the stretch, to invent calumnies in support of the kingdom of darkness. While thus bent on the destruction of Christians, the tyrant Maximian was arrested in his mad career, and made a monument of divine displeasure. He was seized with a disorder which infected his whole body ; he pined away with hunger, and fell down from his bed ; his flesh dropped from his bones, his eyes started from their sockets ; and in his distress, he began to see God passing in judgment before him. Frantic in his agonies, he cried out, "It was not I, but others who did it." At length, by the increasing force of torment, he owned his guilt, and entreated Christ to compassionate his miseries. He confessed himself vanquished, and expired.

Thus closed the most memorable of all the attacks of Satan on the kingdom of Christ. The arm of God was raised, in a wonderful manner, to chastise and purify the church, to demonstrate that the gospel was divine, and to evince that the Most High ruleth, not only in the armies of heaven, but among the inhabitants of the earth.

CHAPTER II.

GENERAL STATE OF THE CHURCH FROM CONSTANTINE TO THEODOSIUS.

THE emperor Constantine had, from early life, some predilection in favor of Christianity. As he was marching from France to Italy, on an expedition, which was likely either to exalt or ruin him, he was greatly oppressed with anxiety. Some god he thought needful to protect him. The God of the Christians he was most inclined to respect ; and sought some satisfactory proof of his real existence and power ; but he neither understood the means of acquiring this, nor could he be content with atheistical indifference. He prayed ; he implored, with much vehemence and importunity ; and God left him not unanswered. It is said by historians, that while he was marching with his forces, the sign of the cross appeared high in the heavens, luminous and spangled with glory. The inscription was, "Conquer by this." He and his soldiers were filled with astonishment. Constantine continued pondering on the event till night. While asleep, Christ appeared to him with the same sign of the cross, and directed him to make use of that symbol in his military operations. Constantine obeyed ; and the cross was, from that time, displayed in his armies. Constantine applied to the pastors of the church for instruction, was made acquainted with the doctrines of the gospel ; and from that time, firmly believed the truth of Christianity, read the Scriptures, and zealously patronised pastors of the church.

Whether Constantine really loved the gospel, and felt its sanctifying influence, is doubtful ; for neither in, nor in his favorite bishops, nor in the general

appearance of the churches, can we see much of the spirit of godliness.

When we look at the external state of the church, we behold an emperor full of zeal for the propagation of the only divine religion, every thing restored to the church, of which it had been deprived, temples dedicated to God with the greatest solemnity, pastors exceedingly honored, and governors urged to promote Christianity.

At this time originated the famous Donatist schism, the second class of dissenters, in the records of the church. Heresies began also to be prevalent ; but none were so powerful, or so afflictive to the church, as that of Arianism. By Arius, a bold and open assault was made upon the Deity of the Son of God.

Arius belonged to Alexandria. He was, at the commencement of his preaching, a promising character ; but soon began to discover a restless and factious spirit. By nature he was formed to deceive ; in conversation he was captivating and agreeable ; he possessed a superior understanding, was well skilled in logic, and all the improvements of the human mind then fashionable. By the pride of reasoning he was seduced to assert, that there was a time when the Son of God was not ; that he was capable of virtue and of vice ; that he was a creature, and mutable as other creatures. He preached diligently at his church, diffused his opinions in all companies, and gained over many of the common people.

Alexander was, at that time, Bishop of Alexandria. He was alarmed at the rapid growth of Arianism ; and having tried lenient measures and argumentative methods, in vain, he summoned a synod of bishops, who met at Alexandria, condemned the doctrines of Arius, and expelled him from the church, with nine of his adherents. Notwithstanding this, Arius persisted in his heretical sentiments, and strengthened himself forming alliances with various bishops. A

synod was held at Alexandria, consisting of nearly a hundred bishops. They condemned Arius and obliged him to quit the place.

Constantine, on an expedition into the East, heard of this controversy, turned his attention immediately to the subject, and summoned the aid of the whole Christian church. Three hundred and eighteen bishops, from all parts of the Christian world, assembled at Nice in Bithynia in the year 325.

After a fair discussion of the subject, Arius was deposed, excommunicated, and banished his country.

We have here the testimony of nearly the whole Christian world, in proof of the proper Diety of the Son of God ; a testimony free, unbiassed, and unrestrained. How can this be accounted for, but hence, that they followed the plain sense of Scripture and of the church in preceding ages ?

Alexander died soon after his return from the Nicaene council. At his request Athanasius succeeded him, and was ordained with the strongest testimony of general satisfaction.

The emperor, who was as much a child in religious discernment, as he was a man in political sagacity, suffered himself to be so far imposed on by the political craft of Arius and his friend Euzoius, as to write in their commendation to the churches. But it was no easy matter to prejudice the orthodox in their favor. Athanasius, in particular, was too conscientious to tolerate the heretical sentiments of Arius ; and on his return from exile, refused to receive him to communion. Consequently, the Arian party were greatly exasperated, united against him, and by false accusation, procured his banishment.

Flushed with the success of his party, Arius, returned to Alexandria, and strengthened the hands of the heretics, who had languished for want of his abilities. The emperor, it seems, was displeased with his proceedings, and ordered him to come to Constan-

ople, and give an account of his conduct. Alexander, a man of eminent piety and integrity, was at that time Bishop of Constantinople. Constantine, by the duplicity of Arius, was deceived; believing that he had renounced his heretical sentiments, he ordered Alexander to receive him into the church, and menaced him with deposition and exile, if he refused. The good bishop could not comply with the requisition, found himself in difficulty, and sought of God direction and assistance. He spent several days and nights in fervent supplication; the faithful followed his example; and prayer was made without ceasing that God would interfere on this occasion. The day soon arrived on which Arius was to be admitted into the church. The heads of the party were parading through the streets with their leader, when a sudden terror, with a disorder in the bowels, seized Arius. He hasted into a place of retirement, and fainted. His bowels were poured out with a vast effusion of blood, and thus he expired.

Constantine survived this event but a short time. He died in the sixty-fifth year of his age; and was succeeded by three sons, Constantine, Constantius, and Constans. The first ruled in Spain and Gaul, the second in the East, and the third in Italy and Africa.

Of Constantine, the eldest, we know but little. He seemed favorably disposed toward the orthodox party; recalled Athanasius from banishment; many others who had been deposed, he restored; but was himself slain by the troops of his brother Constans.

The next brother, Constantius, a man of weak understanding, corrupted by the pride of power, and ill informed in any thing that belonged to real Christianity, was confirmed in the fashionable heresy. During this whole reign, which contained from 337 to 361, a controversy was carried on between the church and the heretics, by arms and resources suited to the genius of the parties. These of the former were prayers,

treatises and preaching, those of the latter policy, intrigue, persecution and the friendship of the great.

Having espoused the Arian cause, Constantius commenced persecution. Some were banished, some scourged, and others suffered death from Arian vengeance. Athanasius, though he wanted not courage and capacity to resist, acted a more prudent part, fled from the storm, and made his escape to Rome.

The emperor Constans was a steady supporter of the Nicene faith. Constantius, intimidated by the threats of his brother, was induced, for a time, to treat the Trinitarians with a degree of lenity; recalled Athanasius from exile, and restored him to the joyful embraces of his people.

By the death of his brother, Constantius became sole master of the empire, and revived the persecution. The good Athanasius was again called to suffer. In this season of affliction, he visited the Monks, and with them found a safe retreat in the desert. Friends of the Nicene faith were cruelly beaten, and some died under the anguish. Venerable bishops were sent into the deserts throughout Egypt; and Arianism reigned, and glutted itself in blood.

That party gained vast multitudes by forming creed after creed, expressed in artful ambiguity, to impose on the unwary. Their cruelty tried to the utmost, the hearts of men; and now the proverb was verified; "All the world against Athanasius, and Athanasius against all the world." Yet the power of divine grace was displayed in preserving a remnant in this disastrous season, and particularly in strengthening the mind of this great man through a long course of affliction.

In the year 361 Constantius died of a fever.

During the reigns of Constantine and Constantius, Paganism experienced a gradual and rapid decline. With inexpressible disappointment the Pagans saw the downfall of their religion; and while their temples were demolished and idols destroyed, the language of

their hearts was, "Ye have taken away my gods, and what have I more?" They were, however, exceedingly numerous, and enjoyed, with silent pleasure, the long and shameful scenes of the Arian controversy.

The eyes of these Pagan votaries were finally directed to Julian, the successor of Constantius. He was warlike; enterprizing, zealous, and a determined foe to the gospel. In the warm imagination of many zealous devotees, even Jupiter himself seemed likely, "To grow terrible again, and to be again adored."

Julian was a man of superior abilities, and the greatest zealot for Paganism the world ever beheld.—Temper, talents, power, and resentment, all conspired to cherish his superstitious sentiments. With serpentine arts, the prince of darkness attempted the restoration of his kingdom by the hand of Julian. Neither address nor dexterity was wanting. All that the wit and prudence of man could do, was attempted; and let it be remembered, that he failed, because his arms were levelled against Heaven.

Julian succeeded Constantius in the year 361. He immediately ordered temples to be set open, decayed ones to be repaired, and new ones to be erected. The whole machinery of Paganism was again brought into operation; altars and fires, blood, perfumes, and priests attending their sacrifices, were every where visible; and even the imperial palace itself had its temple and furniture.

To reform Paganism was his first object. To maintain it on the old system of popular belief, he saw, was impossible. Christian light had now rendered Pagan darkness visible, its deformity disgusting, and its absurdity contemptible. He zealously urged the priests to charity and good works; telling them that the impious Galileans, as he called Christians, had by their singular benevolence, strengthened their party; and that Paganism had suffered for want of attention to those things. But we cannot particular-

ize. It must suffice to say, that Julian attempted the restoration of idolatry, not by shedding the blood of Christians as his predecessors had done; but by making use of philosophy, ridicule, and every artifice that could be invented.

With a design to invalidate the prophecies respecting the desolation of Jerusalem, he urged the Jews to rebuild their temple, and restore its worship, promised to defray the expense, and appointed an officer to superintend the work. But an arm of flesh could not contend with the arm of God. By earthquakes and eruptions, the Lord manifested his displeasure; the enterprise was suddenly baffled, and the workmen obliged to desist.

The church at this time, oppressed with persecution from without, and torn by controversy within, exhibited but a glimmering light.

In 362 Athanasius again returned to his bishopric, and once more illuminated the diocese of Alexandria. During the short time that he was allowed to appear in public, he labored with unremitting industry, and shone with such peculiar lustre, as to draw multitudes around the Christian standard.

He was not, however, permitted long to enjoy the sweets of liberty. Provoked at his growing authority, Julian pronounced against him the sentence of banishment. Perceiving that not only his liberty, but life was in danger, the venerable bishop again sought safety by flight. All the faithful gathered around him weeping; "We must retire a little time, friends," said he, "it is a cloud that will soon be over." He then took leave of them, and going on board a vessel, fled into the obscure parts of Egypt. However, he soon returned in private to Alexandria, where he lay concealed till the end of the persecution.

The triumphant reign of Julian was short. While Providence was hastening his end, he seemed enraged against the Christians, and more than ever bent on

their destruction. On an expedition against the Persians, he received a mortal wound. Conscious of his approaching end, he filled his hand with his blood, and casting it into the air, exclaimed, "O Galilean, thou hast conquered." In his last moments he expressed a readiness to die, boasted that he had lived without guilt, and reflected with pleasure on the innocence of his private, and integrity of his public life ; and added, that in a few moments he should mingle with heaven and the stars.

Julian was succeeded by Jovian in the year 363. In civil history he is not distinguished. In ecclesiastical, he deserves particular attention, on account of his being the first emperor, who has left decisive evidence of real love to the truth, as it is in Jesus.

The army, at Julian's death, was in a situation of extreme danger, far advanced in an enemy's country, and without provision. Having, with some difficulty, effected a treaty of peace with the Persians, Jovian led his army to Antioch, and there applied himself to the regulations of government. The conduct of his predecessor, had involved him in intricate difficulties, both civil and ecclesiastical. The whole empire was torn with intestine division, and Julian's affected toleration had been attended with the horrors of real persecution. On his death, the Pagans were greatly alarmed ; temples were every where shut, priests absconded, and philosophers quitted the cloak. Convinc'd that conscience could not be forced, and that only a voluntary religion was acceptable to God, Jovian made a law, by which he permitted Pagans to re-open their temples, and enjoy free liberty of conscience. At the same time, he declared Christianity to be the established religion, replaced in the standard the figure of the cross, ordered Christians to be restored to their churches, recalled exiles, and reinstated them in all their privileges.

Athanasius no sooner heard of the death of Julian, than he suddenly appeared at Alexandria to the agree-

able surprise of his people. The emperor wrote to him, in a very affectionate and respectful manner, urged him to the faithful discharge of his duty, encouraged him to hope for success, even applied to him for instruction, and entreated his prayers. Provoked to see him thus exalted, the Arians were exceedingly mad against him, and would gladly have effected his ruin. But the emperor, interfering in his behalf, prevented the violence of the Arians; and the faithful bishop was permitted, for ten years, to enjoy the luxury of laboring in the vineyard of Christ.

This good emperor, after a reign of about seven months, was very suddenly removed. Christians sincerely wept, the Pagans, in general, spoke well of him; but the Arians took advantage of his decease, and the church was once more involved in persecution.

Jovian was succeeded by two brothers, Valentinian and Valens. The former governed in the West, the latter in the East. Valentinian followed the plan of Jovian in the affairs of the church. Valens was a man of weak capacity, jealous, and ill qualified to judge either in matters of religion or government. He had, however, ingenuity or rather iniquity enough to persecute the church. He expelled all the followers of the Nicene faith from Constantinople; in Egypt many of the Athanasians were put to death; and numbers, because they presumed to weep after they had been scourged, were committed to prison. Similar outrages were committed in various parts of the empire. While the scourge of persecution was abroad, a lamentable corruption was found to be deeply rooted in the church. Infidels laughed at these evils, the weak were staggered, and true Christians, avoiding the churches as nurseries of impiety, retired into the deserts and lifted up their hands to God with sighs and tears.

Athanasius died in the year 373. In his writings there is nothing very important, but what relates to

the Arian controversy. As a writer he is nervous, clear, and argumentative. As a Christian, he is very conspicuous; and shines with unclouded lustre. His conduct every where appears consistent and upright, directed by the fear of God and the love of immortal souls.

Having reigned fourteen years, Valens perished in a battle with the Goths.

In the East the only comfortable circumstance, we can behold, is that God left not himself without witness; but marked his real church with a number of faithful followers. In the West we have a more cheering prospect. Valentinian, in the beginning of his reign, decided that no man should be compelled in religion; thus giving to all an unrestrained liberty of conscience.

At this time, a new star arose in the Western world, which shone with uncommon lustre. This was the famous Ambrose. He was born in the year 333. His pious sister instructed him in the first principles of godliness, with very great success. At the same time he closely applied himself to the study of the arts and sciences, and became master of all the learning that Greece and Rome could afford. Having arrived to maturity, he pleaded causes with so much dexterity, that he was appointed governor of Milan. In this office, he continued five years, and was renowned for prudence and justice.

On the death of Arventius, the Arian Bishop of Milan, Ambrose was appointed his successor in the year 374. He was astonished at the election, peremptorily refused acceptance, and even used strong and unjustifiable methods to convince the people, that he was not that character of mildness and chastity, which he really was, and which all supposed him to be. This uncommon hypocrisy was, however, easily detected. Finding it in vain to stem the torrent, he stole out of Milan at midnight; but missing his way, and wander-

ing all night, he found himself, in the morning, at the gate of the city. He was discovered, and a guard placed about his person, till at length he was compelled to accept the office assigned him.

Ambrose immediately disengaged himself from temporal concerns, and devoted his time to the ministry. His knowledge of theology was very confined, when he entered upon his office. Being sensible of this truth, he condescended to be taught by Simplicius, a venerable Bishop, whom he loved and revered. It pleased God to make him a useful instrument in the instruction of this luminary. He conveyed to him that fire of divine love, and genuine simplicity in religion, which had very much decayed since the days of Cyprian. Ambrose now gave himself wholly to the work of the Lord, and restored purity of doctrine and discipline.

Valentinian died in the year 375, having reigned eleven years. Violent anger had ever been his predominant evil; a fit of passion at length cost him his life.

Gratian, the eldest son of Valentinian succeeded him in Gaul, Spain, and Britain. His youngest son, then an infant, succeeded in Italy and the rest of the western world. Gratian chose Theodosius as his colleague, who reigned in the East, while he, with the affection of a father, managed the concerns of his infant brother at Rome.

From his earliest years, there appeared unquestionable marks of real godliness in Gratian. The mind of this young prince being strongly fixed on divine-things, he wrote very respectfully to Ambrose of Milan, requested him to come to him immediately, and teach the doctrine of salvation to one who really believed. Speaking of the Son of God, he said, "he would not think so meanly of him, as to make him a mere creature; and that although weak and frail himself, he would extol him as he could, not as his divinity deserved."

The churches, once more recovered from the heavy scourge of affliction, and released from Arian tyranny and impiety, began to effect a reformation. Gregory of Nazianzen was appointed Bishop of Constantinople, and he made vigorous efforts for the restoration of doctrine and discipline.

In the year 380, Theodosius, desirous of co-operating with Gregory and other zealous Pastors in the revival of godliness, published a law, by which he reprobated the heresy of Arius, and expressed his warm approbation of the Nicene faith. Various other efforts were made to eradicate the Arian heresy. But it was found much easier to expel it externally than internally. Although much was attempted, little comparatively could be effected.

In the year, 383, the Emperor Gratian lost his life by the rebellion of Maximus, who commanded in Britain. While dying, his mind was sweetly absorbed in divine things, and he joyfully resigned an earthly kingdom for a heavenly.

The Priscillianites, a heretical sect, who seemed to have combined all the most pernicious heresies, appeared during the reign of Gratian, and infected the greater part of Spain. The heretics were brought as criminals before Maximus the usurper. He inflicted capital punishment on the leaders, and sentenced others to banishment. Christianity never received a greater scandal; and men, who feared God and loved moderation and charity, wept and prayed in secret; despised and disregarded by the two parties, who trampled on the rules of godliness.

Justina, the Empress, was a decided patroness of Arianism, and began openly to instruct her son in her doctrines, and to induce him to menace the bishop of Milan. Ambrose exhorted him to support the doctrine received from the Apostles. Young Valentinian, in a rage, ordered the guards to surround the church, and commanded Ambrose to come out of it. "I shall not

willingly," replied the bishop, " give up the sheep of Christ to be devoured by wolves ; you may use your swords and spears against me, such a death I will freely undergo." He was next ordered to resign two of the churches of Milan to the Arian party. He said, " If the Emperor had sent to demand my house or land, money or goods, I would have freely resigned them, but I will not deliver that which is committed to my charge." The heroic conduct of the bishop greatly exasperated the Arian party. Many persons were seized, the prisons were full of tradesmen, and men of rank were highly threatened. A person came to the bishop from the Emperor, and asked him, whether he intended to usurp the empire. " I have an empire," said he, " it is true ; but it lies in weakness, according to the saying of the Apostle, " When I am weak then am I strong." Wearied, and at length overcome, with his resolution, the guards were ordered to leave the church.

The news, that Maximus intended to invade Italy, arrived at this critical time, and threw the court of Milan into the greatest trepidation. Theodosius came immediately to the assistance of Valentinian, and put an end to the usurpation and life of Maximus. By his means the young Emperor was induced to forsake his mother's sentiments, and professedly embraced those of Ambrose.

Young Valentinian fell a victim to the rage of his enemies and Theodosius soon became master of the Roman world. Under his authority, the extirpation of idolatry was carried on with more decisive vigor than ever. Egypt, in particular, felt the happy effects of it ; and thus the country which had nourished idolatry earlier, and more passionately, than any other, was made a special scene of the triumphs of God, and his Christ.

This great prince expired at Milan, in the year 395, having reigned sixteen years. Paganism never again peared its head ; but the trophies of the Redeemer's

kingdom continued to extend, and the religion, which is of God, made its way through all opposition.

The clemency, liberality, and generosity of Theodosius are admirable. He was a model of gravity, temperance, and chastity. The excess of anger was his predominant evil; and it sometimes occasioned the bitterest remorse, and deepest humiliation of soul.

This chapter we shall conclude with some further account of Ambrose.

Ambrose died about the year 397, admired and lamented by the whole Christian world. His life was probably shortened, by the incessant activity of his mind, and the multiplicity of his employments. He was appointed bishop at the age of thirty-four and died at fifty-seven. Ambrose was remarkable for a kind, sympathizing, benevolent disposition, immense labors, and fidelity in the discharge of pastoral duties.

In his writings, he speaks of himself, with the greatest humility; and mourns with heart-felt anguish, over his depraved nature, and actual offences against the God of love.

While contemplating the heavenly world, and the joys that surround the saints in glory, he says, "We shall go to those, who sit down in the kingdom of God, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We shall go where there is a paradise of pleasure, where the wretched being, who fell among thieves, no longer weeps over his wounds; where the thief himself rejoices in the participation of the heavenly kingdom; where there shall be no more storms and vicissitudes, but the glory of God alone shall shine. We shall go where Jesus has prepared mansions for his servants, that where he is, there we may be also."

Ambrose was a decided advocate for the doctrine of the Trinity, and wrote largely on the subject.

It cannot be denied, that he helped forward the growth of monastic bondage and prelatic pride. But the lover of godliness will be disposed to forget his

faults, and remember only the fervent, the humble, the charitable bishop of Milan.

CHAPTER III.

PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL IN THIS CENTURY.

DURING this century the gospel was successfully preached in Abyssinia, and the trophies of the Redeemer's kingdom displayed in that barbarous country.

The Iberians, a people bordering on the Black Sea, in a military excursion took prisoner a pious Christian woman. Her sanctity of manners, fervent prayers, and zealous exhortations, engaged the respect of the barbarians, and induced the king and queen to embrace the gospel.

Constantius erected churches in Arabia Felix, sent the gospel there, and spread at least the name of Christianity in that barbarous country.

From the ecclesiastical accounts of Britain, it seems that Christianity was generally diffused through that Island; and that the gospel flourished there in humble security.

In Persia, Christians were so numerous as to sustain a grievous persecution in the reign of Constantine. The people of God suffered there with so much sincerity and fortitude, as to evince, that the Lord had much people in that place.

CHAPTER IV.

CHRISTIAN AUTHORS, IN THIS CENTURY.

EPHRAIM the Syrian was born in Mesopotamia, and educated with great care by his Christian parents. His turn of mind, from childhood, was devout, studious and contemplative, to an extreme degree.

He was advanced to the office of a deacon, and to avoid being preferred to that of a bishop, feigned himself mad and escaped. At this time the pastoral office appeared to good men awful beyond measure, requiring little less than angelic virtue.

Ephraim wrote much on the Scripture, and various devotional pieces in the Syriac, his native tongue. A few extracts from his writings, will discover the spirit of his religion.

He gives very feeling descriptions of his own sinfulness, and with anguish of soul mourns on account of in-dwelling sin.

Speaking of humility, he says, "Vain is every endowment without humility. Pride labors to domineer over all, and lays a snare for every one. The wise, the strong, the beautiful, are each exposed to danger from that in which they excel. The Lord, knowing our danger, hath set humility as our guard, saying, "When ye have done all, say, we are unprofitable servants."

Speaking of Christ he says, "Who would not love such a master, worship him, and confess his goodness? From the immense height and the blessed bosom of the Father, did he not descend to us? The invisible became visible! O wonder, full of fear and trembling!"

BASIL OF CAESAREA.

Basil, surnamed the Great on account of his uncommon learning and piety, was descended from Christian parents. His grandmother was eminently useful to him, superintended his education, and fixed in his mind the principles of godliness. Quitting his domestic circle, he travelled for improvement in knowledge, and possessed himself of all the secular learning of the age. Had he given himself wholly to the world, his superior advantages, uncommon endowments and indefatigable industry, would have raised him to the height of eminence. But he sought food for his soul, applied himself to the sacred study of theology, and there found an exhaustless source of consolation.

Basil beheld the pollutions of the world, sincerely abhorred them, and wishing to avoid the infection, retired from society. He incited his friend Gregory with many others, to embrace a retired life, and there employ themselves in prayer, singing, and other devotional exercises. Here these two friends formed the basis of those superstitious institutions, that finally overrun the church.

By the authority of Gregory of Nazianzen, Basil was finally prevailed on to quit his retirement, and accept the office of a bishop. Cæsarea was the place assigned him. In this situation, calumny, malice, and the domineering power of Arianism, afflicted him with various trials. But his patience was unwearied, and as his body became enfeebled by various distempers, his mind seems to have collected fresh vigor. Finding that he was rapidly declining, the people flocked about his house, sensible of the value of such a pastor. He discoursed piously to them, and sealed his last breath, with the ejaculation—“ Into thine hands I commit my spirit.” He died in the year 379.

CENTURY V.

CHAP. I.

CHRISTIAN AUTHORS—JOHN CHRYSOSTOM.

SOME brief account of this renowned father will properly introduce the fifth century. The transactions, with which his story is connected, extend a few years into the last century, and are very descriptive of the religious state of the East at that time.

He was born at Antioch about the year 354. His education was entrusted to the care of his mother, who very strictly attended to it; and at an early age he was disposed to favor Christianity. Being endowed with a native eloquence, he devoted himself to the study of rhetoric, and gave abundant instances of his oratorical abilities. Having pleaded a short time in the forum, he began to find a vacancy in his mind, not to be supplied by secular arts and studies. It seems that the spirit of God affected his heart, and from that time drew his attention to the study of the Scriptures.

He soon had recourse to the fashionable superstition, retired from society, and imposed on himself the most severe austerities. In this situation, he lived till the bishop of Antioch promoted him to the office of a presbyter in his diocese, where he discharged his duties with great fidelity and perseverance. At a certain time, the people of Antioch were, by their seditious conduct, reduced to a state of very great distress. Many of the inhabitants were imprisoned, and all in fear and consternation, expected the wrath of the emperor. John very properly improved the opportunity to exhort them to repentance, and rendered

their awful suspense, an instructive emblem of the day of judgment. At the same time, his spirit was softened and overawed with the mingled sensations of pity and devotion. While he observed the severe proceedings of the courts, and the vain intercessions of relations for husbands and fathers, he was led to reflect how awful the day of judgment will be, when not a mother, sister, or father can arrest the course of divine justice, or give the least relief to the nearest relation.

In the year 398, Chrysostom was appointed bishop of Constantinople. He began immediately to attempt the reformation of his diocese. He preached, prayed, exhorted, commanded, and in many respects, effected a reformation. The common people heard him gladly; but the great and the rich were soon exasperated; and the clergy, indolent and corrupt, vehemently opposed him; and attempted his ruin. But seeking to obey God rather than man, Chrysostom enlarged his plans for doing good, and persevered with unremitting assiduity. However, a combination of events finally conspired against him. A synod, managed by Theophilus, his determined enemy, and supported by Eudoxia the empress, most unjustly condemned him. At the same time some of the bishops, who were his friends, assembled at his house. Chrysostom, foreseeing the effects of the storm which was gathering around him, thus addressed them: "Brethren, be earnest in prayer; and as you love our Lord Jesus, let none of you, for my sake, desert your charge. For as was St. Paul's case, I am ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I see I must undergo many hardships, and then quit this troublesome life." The assembly being afflicted with vehement sorrow, he besought them to moderate their grief, saying, "For me to live is Christ; and to die is gain. I always told you, this life is a road, in which joys and sorrows pass swiftly away. The visi-

ble scene of things before us, is like a fair, where we buy, and sell, and sometimes recreate ourselves. Are we better than the Patriarchs? Do we excel the Prophets and Apostles, that we should live here forever?"

The friends of the bishop, however, insisted on his being heard by more equitable judges, and so greatly were they agitated, that Chrysostom, fearing a popular insurrection, secretly delivered himself up to the officer, who came to execute the imperial warrant against him. He was conveyed immediately to a port of the Black Sea. As soon as it was known, that he was gone, the whole city was in an uproar; and the tumult at length became so violent, that Eudoxia herself, frightened at the danger, pressed her husband to recal him; and even wrote to Chrysostom, a letter full of professions of sorrow and respect. Chrysostom was therefore restored to his bishopric in peace. But this calm soon terminated. A silver statue of the empress, was solemnly erected in the street, just before the great church of St. Sophia. The people were accustomed there to meet and indulge in sports and pastimes, to the distraction of the congregation. The bishop, impatient of these things, censured them from the pulpit; and with great imprudence, began his sermon as follows: "Now again Herodias raves and is vexed, again she dances, again she desires John's head in a charger."

The enemies of the bishop could not desire a greater advantage. Numbers were ready to gratify the resentment of Eudoxia; and Arcadius, overcome by importunity, again ordered his deposition. He was suspended, and confined; and his friends and followers, dispersed, rifled, killed, or imprisoned. Receiving, at length, a warrant signed by the emperor to depart, he once more retired from his see, and was conveyed to Cucusus in Armenia, a barren, cold region, infested with robbers. His journey to this place, was attend-

ed with many grievous hardships, though sweetened with the compassionate care of various persons, who keenly sympathized with injured innocence. At Cucusus, however, he met with very generous treatment, preached frequently to a people who heard him gladly, and made vigorous attempts for the conversion of the Phœnicians.

His enemies, beholding, with an evil eye, the respect every where paid to him, procured an order for his removal to Pityus, the very shore of the Black Sea. On his way there, he was brought to an Oratory, where he desired rest; but his guards who had treated him with brutal ferocity, refused him the indulgence. Nature was, however, exhausted. He had not gone four miles before he was so extremely ill, that they were obliged to return with him. Here he received the Lord's Supper, made his last prayer before them all, and having concluded with his usual doxology, "Glory to God for all events," he breathed out his soul in the fifty-third year of his age, in the year 407.

AUGUSTINE.

From the latter end of the third century, to the former part of the fifth, we have seen a gradual declension of godliness. Toward the close of the fifth century, God interposed with a second great effusion of his Spirit, and the church arose from its ruins, at least in some parts of the empire. The great instrument of this work was Augustine, the bishop of Hippo. By a very remarkable work of divine grace on his own soul, he was qualified to contend with growing corruptions, and illuminate the regions of darkness.

In his Confession, we have a long and interesting account of his conversion. A short abridgment will strikingly evince the power of divine grace, displayed in this wonderful man.

In the first part of his confession, he speaks of the native depravity of his heart ; acknowledges, that from infancy, it was at enmity against God.

He next confesses the scenes of baseness and carnal corruptions, through which he passed in youth. The voice of his carnal desires rendered him deaf to the voice of conscience, and caused him to burst all legal bonds, and plunge from depth to depth in wickedness.

His father made the greatest efforts for his improvement, and sent him to Carthage, that he might enjoy the best advantages.

But his mother, ever mindful of the good of his soul, prayed for him with unabating fervor, and intreated a certain bishop, to undertake to reason him out of his errors. "Your son," said he, "is too much elated, at present, and carried away with the pleasing novelty of his errors, to attend to my arguments. Let him alone, only continue praying for him, he will, in the course of his study, discover his errors." All this satisfied not the anxious mother. With floods of tears she persisted in her request, when at last the bishop, a little out of temper on account of her importunity, said, "Begone, good woman, it is not possible that a child of such tears should perish."

For the space of nine years, from the nineteenth to the twenty-eighth year of his age, he lived deceived and deceiving others, seducing his acquaintances into various lusts, and in all things seeking vain glory. He maintained himself, at this time, by instructing in Rhetoric ; and taught his pupils, not how to oppress the innocent, but sometimes how to vindicate the guilty.

An unexpected occurrence of Providence induced him to remove from Carthage to Rome. He stole away from the fond embraces of his mother, and left her weeping behind. But while her son was in the mire of sin, while her tears watered the earth, and

her prayers ascended as incense before the throne of God, the time drew nigh, in which her mourning was turned into rejoicing, and her spirit of supplication, to that of praise and thanksgiving.

From Rome, he went to Milan, and became a professor of Rhetoric. There he waited on Ambrose, was affectionately received by him, and conceived a fond attachment for him. He attended his lectures, not with an expectation of profiting by them, but with a curious desire of discovering whether same had done justice to his eloquence. He stood indifferent and fastidious with respect to the matter, and at the same time was delighted with the sweetness of his manner. But the truths, which he at first neglected, were at length enforced on his mind, and they brought him gradually to attend to the doctrine of the bishop.

His mother, courageous in all danger, and sure of the Divine protection, followed him by land and sea. When he told her his present situation, she expressed her confident opinion, that before she left this world, she should see him a sound believer.

Every Lord's day, he attended on the ministry of Ambrose, and was more and more convinced of the truth of his doctrine. Still he was wretchedly unhappy.

The more light he received, the farther he seemed from God. He trembled with horror; and the bitterness of his soul became unutterable. With eagerness, he took up the volume of inspiration, saw a uniform consistency through the whole, and was confirmed in the doctrinal views, though his heart remained unchanged.

In this fluctuating state, he seemed like one desirous of awaking, but sinking again into sleep. "*By and by—shortly—let me alone a little.*" These were the feelings of his heart. But "*by and by*" had no bounds, and "*let me alone a little,*" went a great length. His anxiety increased, and he daily groaned under the weight of his guilt.

On a certain day a pious friend came to visit him, and gave him an account of two of his companions, who had suddenly renounced the world and given themselves up to God. This narration excited every feeling of his heart ; and he used every motive to urge forward his reluctant spirit. But his arguments were spent; a silent trepidation remained, and deliverance itself he dreaded as death. "What is this," said he to Alypius ; "illiterate men rise up and seize heaven, while we, with all our learning, are rolling in the filth of sin. In the agitation of his spirit, he retired into the garden. Alypius followed. They sat down, and with vehement indignation Augustine rebuked his sinful spirit, because it would not give itself up to God. He found he wanted a will. When deep meditation had collected all his misery into the view of his heart, a storm arose producing a large shower of tears. To give it vent, he arose hastily, went from his friend, prostrated himself under a figtree, and with tears bursting out, spake to this effect : "How long, Lord, wilt thou be angry ? forever ? Remember not my old iniquities, for I perceive myself entangled by them. How long shall I say to-morrow ? Why should not this hour put an end to my misery ?" As he spake, and wept in the bitterness of his soul, he was impressed with the idea, that he must return immediately to his friend, with whom he had left St. Paul's Epistles, and read. He did, seized the book, opened it, and read as follows : "Not in rioting, and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying ; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof." Immediately, at the end of this sentence all his doubts vanished. He closed the book, and with a tranquil countenance gave it to his friend. After some farther conversation with Alypius, he went to his mother, carried her the joyful news of his conversion ; who now triumphed in the abundant answers given to h

prayers, and received the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

With the most lively and devout emotions he thus acknowledges the hand of God in his conversion.—“ O Lord, I am thy servant, and the son of thy hand-maid. Thou hast broken my bonds in sunder. Let my heart, and tongue, and all my bones say, Lord, who is like unto thee ? and do thou answer me, and say to my soul, I am thy salvation. Who and what am I ? What evil am I not ? The whole of my evil lay in a will, stubbornly set in opposition to thine. How sweet was it, to be freed in a moment from those delightful vanities, to lose which had been my dread, to part with which was now my joy. Thou ejectedst them, O my true and consummate delight, and thou enteredst in their room. O sweeter than all pleasure, but not to flesh and blood ; clearer than all light, but to the inner man ; higher than all honor, but not to those who are high in their own eyes. Now was my soul set free from the corroding cares of avarice, and ambition, and lust ; and communed with playful ease, with thee my light, my riches, my Saviour, and my God.”

He determined to quit his employment and unite himself to the church, wrote to Ambrose an account of his conversion, and soon after received baptism. He was, at that time, in a very delightful frame of mind, and could not be satisfied with contemplating the mystery of redemption. The hymns and songs of the church moved his soul intensely ; divine truth, was by them distilled into his heart ; they kindled the flame of piety, and his tears flowed for joy.

Augustine and his mother concluded to leave Milan, and while they were making preparations for returning to Africa, they conversed together in a manner highly agreeable to both. Forgetting the past, they looked forward into the boundless regions of eternity.

ent the world appeared to them of no va-

lue ; and his mother said, " Son, I have no delight in life. What have I to do here ? and why am I here ? I know not ; the hope of this life being quite spent.— One thing only, your conversion, was an object for which I wished to live. My God has given me this in a large measure." Scarcely five days after she fell into a fever, and departed this life on the ninth day of her illness, in the fifty-sixth year of her age.

Augustine, after the death of his mother, returned to Africa, and lived nearly three years in retirement. A desire of obliging a person, of some consequence, in Hippo, brought him, at length, to that city. Through the strong and urgent desire of that people, he was there elected Bishop. Here his ministry was useful in the instruction and edification of the brethren ; and also in the defeat of various heresies ; and the doctrines of faith, hope, and charity, were by his means, diffused and enforced with increasing vigor, throughout the Western world.

THE PELAGIAN CONTROVERSY.

Augustine is so conspicuous in this controversy, that we may with propriety introduce it in this place.

At this time, while the Spirit of God was in a great measure withdrawn, a new heresy, altogether exclusive of the operations of the Spirit began to be prevalent. This was Pelagianism. It introduced a controversy of unspeakable importance, attended with lasting and extensive consequences ; and was, eventually, a great means of introducing juster views of the doctrines of grace ; and of reviving Christian truth, humility and piety.

Pelagius was born in Britain. Cœlestius, his partner in the propagation of this heresy, was an Irishman. The heretical opinions of Pelagius did not appear, until he was far advanced in life, in the year 404 or 405. By a dexterity, very common to

heretics, Palagius, while he laid open to his converts the whole mystery of his doctrines, imparted only so much to others, as might be more calculated to ensure their affections, than to inform them of his real opinions.

Pelagianism was, however, found to be little more than a revival of Deism, or what is commonly called natural religion. Palagius maintained, that Adam would have died whether he had sinned or not ; that men might be saved by the law, as well as by the gospel ; that infants just born are in the same state as Adam was before transgression.

Pelagius went from place to place, scattering his heretical sentiments throughout the Roman empire ; and so rapidly did they spread, that the Christian public became exceedingly alarmed, formed a combination against the heretics, and the sect underwent a general condemnation.

The party was, however, indefatigable ; and it was found that nothing but sound argument could extirpate the heresy. The bishop of Hippo was eminently qualified for this business ; again he assumed his pen, and for more than twenty years employed himself in writing and preaching against the heresy.

The heresiarchs could not withstand the arguments of this Christian hero ; in silent despair they beheld the destruction of their system, and were finally reduced to an almost insufferable state of obscurity.

Such were the rise, progress, and consequences of the most important heresy in the church of Christ. There must indeed be heresies, "that they which are approved may be made manifest."

AUGUSTINE'S CONDUCT TOWARDS THE DONATISTS.

The bishop of Hippo, beside the care of the African churches, and the peculiar inspection of his own diocese, was assiduously employed against the Pelagians, the Manichees, and the Donatists. The two former sects he in a measure eradicated ; the last he opposed with much success.

Some of the Donatists, were, comparatively speaking, a mild and peaceable people ; others, called the Circumcelliones, were a mere banditti, sons of violence and bloodshed, who neither valued their own lives, nor the lives of their neighbors, and were remarkable for committing suicide in a fit of frenzy. They had a peculiar malice against the pastors of the general church ; waylaid them from time to time, attacked them with armed forces, mutilated or even killed them.

There was nothing peculiarly doctrinal in their whole scheme. They differed from the general church only concerning a matter of fact ; namely, whether Cæcilian had been legally ordained. The Donatists were crumbled into parties, and subdivided into small bodies. Each party condemned all the others, pretended to monopolize the truth, and all united in condemning the general church.

When Augustine saw the vast numbers of them with which Africa swarmed, and heard of the horrible outrages committed by them, he felt the necessity of exercising civil restraints ; but shuddered at the thought of exposing the whole sect to the penal laws of the Empire. He therefore wrote to the imperial court, expressing his opinion, that the lawless and savage conduct of the Circumcelliones, ought to be restrained by the civil sword ; but desired that no other arms should be used against the peaceable Donatists but preaching and argument.

Other bishops of Africa, in their immoderate zeal, wrote to the imperial court, and urged the importance of exercising civil restraint toward the whole sect of the Donatists. Imperial edicts were therefore issued against them, which so affected the Circumcelliones, that many of them with much humility and joy, and with every mark of genuine repentance, returned to the bosom of the church.

Moved by the effects, rather than the reason of the case, the bishop of Hippo endeavored to support in his writings, the justice and reasonableness of the imperial methods against the Donatists. It is certain, however, that he continued extremely tender in his conscience, repeatedly, and earnestly pressed the magistrates, on no account to shed blood ; and in all his writings and conduct on this occasion, demonstrated that he was led by principle, by the fear of God, and by a charitable compassion for the good of souls.

Donatism, under the pious and argumentative labours of Augustine, received a fatal blow ; and the sect gradually dwindled into obscurity.

With the suppression of this sect, the ecclesiastical affairs in Africa were meliorated, and a great accession was made to the general church.

A SHORT REVIEW OF AUGUSTINE'S WORKS, AND AN ACCOUNT OF HIS DEATH.

Augustine's "City of God" deserves an unqualified commendation. The capture of Rome by Alaric the Goth, and the subsequent plunder and miseries of the imperial city, opened the mouths of Pagans, and caused the true God to be blasphemed. Christianity was considered the cause of these evils ; and the sentiment was so generally believed, that Augustine, in for the glory of God, wrote this treatise.

The work consists of twenty books. He first shews that Paganism could do nothing for men in temporal things ; and that it was totally insignificant with respect to the future life. He then describes the rise, progress, and issue of the two states, namely, the city of God and the world. The history of both, and the different genius and spirit of each, are conceived with energy, and illustrated with copiousness and perspicuity.

He refutes the various presumptions of those, who expect to escape the damnation of hell, without a sound conversion ; and closes, with a delightful view of the eternal felicity of the church of God.

In the method of catechising, he recommends to begin with narration, and to give the pupils a clear and succinct view of the great facts, relative to our religion, as contained in both the Old Testament and the New. In doing this, he recommends that the teacher refer every thing which he relates, to the plan of divine love in the gift of Jesus Christ ; describe the fall, the redemption, and the method of God in winning back the apostate spirits of men to love him, in return for his free love to us in Jesus Christ.

When the catechist has finished his narration, he should add exhortation, laying open the hope of resurrection, and the awful views of divine Judgment, of heaven and hell. He should arm the catechumen against the scandals and temptations to which he may be exposed from the perverseness of heretics, the malice of open enemies, or the evil lives of nominal Christians. And he is particularly to be directed, how to please God, to live a holy life, and adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.

His exposition of the Psalms is full of pious sentiments. He often breaks out into beautiful and pathetic observations, sees Christ every where, and is delighted with the prophetic vision of the Psalmist.

His treatise on the Trinity is very elaborate. All, perhaps, that has ever been said in vindication and explanation of that great mystery, is contained in this book. It is in perfect unison with the expositions and sentiments of all the pious men who succeed him. The introduction of his prayer, at the close, is very striking. “O Lord our God, we believe in Thee, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. For the Truth would not have said, Go baptize all nations, in the name of three, if thou wert not a Trinity. Nor wouldest thou have ordered us to be baptized in the name of him, who is not God.”

Amidst the multiplied and arduous employments of Augustine, he found time to manage a large epistolary correspondence; in which he admonishes, comforts, and instructs his friends. In one of his letters, he cautions his friend against the pride of secular learning, representing humility to be the first, the second, the third, the *all*, in true religion.

Augustine was not suffered to depart this life without a cloud of grievous afflictions. Genseric, king of the Vandals, invaded Africa, and treated the inhabitants with the most unmerciful and barbarous ferocity. To the tender mind of Augustine, the devastation of the country, the cruelty inflicted on the pastors, the desolation of the churches, and the destruction of all church order, was peculiarly afflictive.

In the midst of these calamities, he was seized with a fever, which terminated his life, at the age of seventy six, in the year 430. He did not cease to repent, until he ceased to live. He had David's penitential psalms inscribed on the wall in his last sickness, and read and wept abundantly. For ten days previous to his death, he desired not to be interrupted, spent his time mostly in devotional exercises, and continued a supplicating penitent, until he was released from the bondage of sin and mingled with the glory.

JEROM.

This renowned monk was born at Stridon, a town on the confines of Dalmatia, in the year 331. He was the most learned man of the Roman fathers, and was eminent both for genius and industry.

Having finished his education at Rome, he travelled into France, examined libraries, collected information from all quarters, and then devoted himself to the profession of a monk.

Jerom was addicted to spleen and calumny, although apparently humble before God, truly pious, and devoutly engaged in the service of his divine Master.

His reputation, as a man of knowledge and abilities, has been much overrated. His learning, combined with much ignorance, gave celebrity to superstition, and darkened the light of the gospel. Yet his voluminous writings were sound in the essentials of Christianity; and occasionally a vigorous and evangelical sentiment breaks out amidst the clouds of superstition.

He died at the age of ninety, in the year 422.

Many other Christian authors of this century might be mentioned, whose lives evince them to be the servants of God, and whose writings testify their belief in the distinguishing doctrines of the Bible; namely, the depravity and helplessness of human nature, the necessity of regenerating grace, the influence of the Spirit, the Deity of the Son of God, the future misery of the wicked and the everlasting enjoyment of the saints in heaven.

CHAPTER II.

GENERAL STATE OF THE CHURCH IN THIS CENTURY.

IT is time again to take up the connected thread of history, though only a short sketch will be expected.

On the death of Theodosius, the empire was rent asunder by various convulsions. But amidst scenes of desolation, the real church lived, while the secular glory of Rome was departing. Honorius, the son of Theodosius, reigned in the west, while his brother Arcadius governed at Constantinople. Honorius protected the church, and followed the example of Theodosius, in extirpating the remains of idolatry, suppressing heretical opinions, and in supporting orthodoxy.

One of the greatest ornaments of Gaul in this century, was Germanus, bishop of Auxerre. He was unanimously elected bishop by the clergy, nobility, citizens; and peasants; and notwithstanding the great reluctance which he discovered, he was compelled to accept the office. He founded monasteries, enriched the church while he impoverished himself, and for thirty years lived in extreme austerity.

About the year 430 he was called to visit Great-Britain, and oppose the Pelagians who had infected that region. He immediately set out, and in company with Lupus, bishop of Troyes, came to the place, and held a conference with the Pelagians. The doctrines of grace were debated, the two bishops supported their sentiments by express passages of Scripture, silenced their opponents, and came off victorious.

Having defended the doctrines of grace, preached in various places to large and anxious assemblies, baptized great numbers, and rendered other essential services to that people, the two bishops returned to the continent.

In the year 446 Germanus was requested to visit Britain the second time; he complied with the invitation, opposed the Pelagians, with great success, and baffled the attempts of those, who disturbed the faith of Christians and brought dishonor on the cause of Christ.

His authority was very great, and constantly employed in the propagation of Christian doctrines to the benefit of society, and the good of immortal souls. He

The next sectarianism which disturbed the church was Semipelagianism. It was very prevalent in Gaul, and in various other places. This doctrine strongly recommends itself to the depraved taste of mankind. It divides the work of salvation between free grace and human ability, in such a manner, that it both retains a specious appearance of humility toward God, and at the same time flatters the pride of man.

The benign influences of the gospel began, in this century, to be felt in the barbarous country of Scotland. Palladius was the first bishop of that country. He arrived there in the year 431, and found the inhabitants in a state of extreme barbarism. He was succeeded by Patrick, who having continued there a short time was providentially removed to Ireland. He was remarkable for his unwearied zeal, and labored with so much success, that to this day, he is considered the Apostle of that country. He died in an advanced age in the year 460.

About the year 439 Genseric, king of the Vandals, surprised and took Carthage, in the midst of peace, and exercised the greatest cruelty towards the inhabitants.

He was an Arian by profession, and the same unprincipled conduct which ever characterized that party, was conspicuous in this unfeeling tyrant. He shewed the greatest malice towards the bishops, banished some, tortured others; many he compelled to suffer martyrdom; and when a few, who still remained in the provinces, presented themselves before him, and entreated, that, as they had lost their churches and their wealth, they might at least, be allowed to remain in Africa without molestation: "I have resolved to leave none of your name or nation," was the reply of the stern barbarian. With much difficulty, he was withheld from ordering them to be thrown into the sea.

During this persecution, a number of godly persons, having endured a variety of hardships and tortures, were delivered into the hands of Capsur, king of the

Moors, a relation of Genseric. They were brought to the desert where he lived, and were led to commiserate the wretched condition of the inhabitants. Ever solicitous for the good of souls, and the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, they taught the barbarians of that country the knowledge of God, and were instrumental in leading a great number to embrace the Christian religion, in a country where the name of Jesus had never before been heard. Genseric heard of their pious endeavors, and was so incensed against them, that he condemned them to death. The converted Moors mourned and wept, and the martyrs, as they passed them, said to each one, "Brother, pray for us; God has accomplished our desires; this is the way to the heavenly kingdom."

Such was the dismal state of Africa. Indeed the growing abominations seemed to call for such a scourge. The light of divine grace had revived in the west, purified a precious few, and fitted them for suffering. But with the majority, both superstition and prelatical wickedness increased. Carthage was a sink of vice. Lewdness, oppression and injustice were so prevalent, that the dominion of the barbarians was more tolerable than that of the Romans.

The whole empire of the West was, at this time, falling into ruin. Odoacer, king of Heruli, made himself master of Rome in the year 476. Africa, we have seen, bowed under the yoke of the Vandals; Spain, and a great part of Gaul was held in subjection by the Goths; and the southern part of Great-Britain was overpowered by the idolatrous Saxons. All these conquerors were enemies to godliness. Indeed, it was a gloomy season to the whole western church. Christians had long abused the mercies of God; and in the dispensations of his providence, he poured out his wrath, and exhibited tokens of his displeasure.

Genseric died in the year 477, and was succeeded at son Huneric. He began his reign with

a mild aspect towards the Christians, and permitted them to ordain a bishop at Carthage. Eugenius was elected, and all mankind bore testimony to his virtues. But Huneric began gradually to show the ferocity of his nature, by exercising more barbarous cruelty toward the faithful, than his predecessor had done. He put many to death, and 4976, he at one time confined in the most filthy prison, and then delivered them to the Moors to be driven into the deserts. When taken from prison, they were covered with filth, and while approaching the deserts, they appeared triumphant in suffering, and sang, "Such honor have all the saints."

There is a voice in man, which speaks loudly in favor of suffering innocence. The whole country resounded with the cries and groans of people, who flocked to behold them, and threw their children at their feet, saying, "Alas, to whom do you leave us? Who shall baptize these children? Who shall administer the Lord's Supper to us? Why are we not permitted to go with you?" With tears in their eyes the sufferers replied, "God's will be done." During their march they were treated with the most brutal ferocity. Some, who were unable to advance, the Moors pricked forward with their javelins, or threw stones at them. Such as were not able to walk, they tied by the feet and dragged on the ground. Many died on the march, and the remainder arrived at the deserts, and were fed with barley.

Huneric, as though the very soul of Gelarius had been bound up in him, pursued his sanguinary designs with unrelenting cruelty. He sent executioners among the laity, who whipped, hanged, and burned alive the faithful.

At length, after a horrible reign of seven years and ten months, the tyrant died of a disease in which he was corroded with worms, a signal monument of Divine justice.

Huneric was succeeded by Gontamond, his nephew. He put a stop to the persecution, recalled the banished, and established the worship of God. He died in the year 499 and was succeeded by Thrasamond.

Theodoric, the Ostrogoth, conquered Odoacer, and made himself complete master of all Italy. Perceiving the desolations of that country, and that the Burgundians had carried away captive many of the inhabitants, he wished to redeem them, and employed Epiphanius, bishop of Pavia, to intercede with the Burgundians for that purpose. He executed the embassy with wonderful success. This excellent bishop was born in Pavia, in the year 438. From early life, he was engaged in the cause of truth, and devoted himself wholly to the service of God, and the good of mankind. He was often successfully employed in public affairs, negotiated peace, interceded for the redemption of captives, and softened the horrors of war.

About the year 496, Clovis, king of the Franks, entered Gaul, subdued the barbarian invaders, and by carnage and violence, founded the French monarchy. Although wicked, ambitious, and cruel, he was, through the means of his pious wife, honored as an instrument of much good. Clotilda, his wife, was zealous for the doctrine of the Trinity, firmly persevered in the apostolic faith, reasoned with her husband on the vanity of idols, and preached Christianity to him with much sincerity. Although he continued inflexible, she persevered in her exhortations. Having on a certain occasion, experienced a remarkable interposition of Providence, and being affected with a sense of divine goodness, Clovis submitted to the instructions of a bishop, was baptized, and nominally embraced Christianity. His sister and 3000 of his army followed his example.

During this century we behold the gradual and alarm-
th of superstition, and see the despised and
church, overborne by heretics and barba-

rous Pagans. Still she lived in Italy, Spain, France, and Britain. In Italy and Spain, Christianity was only tolerated ; in Britain, confined to the mountains of Wales and Cornwall ; in France, ready to rise into eminence ; and in Africa, just recovered from a dreadful scourge in which she gloriously triumphed.

The vices which tarnished the Western church, were superstition, and polemic subtlety. These prevailed very generally, and to a much higher degree, in the East ; still the Spirit of God condescended to move amidst the chaos, and form his image in the souls of a precious few.

During a part of the reign of Theodosius, the Christians in Persia, were kindly protected, and allowed to propagate the gospel. But the imprudent conduct of an individual exasperated the king, and so inflamed his passions, that he afflicted them with outrageous barbarity ; and laid the foundation of a cruel persecution, which continued thirty years.

Theodosius reigned 41 years. He appeared to fear God, and contributed to the promotion of religion ; yet he was a feeble prince, and held the reigns of government with a remiss and negligent hand. The public were, however, more than compensated by the wise and energetic efforts of his sister. Her meekness, discretion, and superior capacity, enabled her to gain a complete ascendancy over her brother, and to manage the affairs of government with very great success.

Theodosius died in the year 450, leaving his sister sole mistress of the Eastern empire. She gave herself in marriage to Marcian, whom she made emperor. He was renowned for his exertions in favor of religion. The preservation of orthodoxy, the encouragement of good morals, and the destruction of idolatry were his favorite objects. He died in the year 457.

One circumstance belonging to the reign of Theodosius deserves to be inserted. A Jewish impostor of Crete pretended that he was Moses, and that he had

been sent from heaven to undertake the care of the Cretian Jews. He preached a year in the island, with a view to induce them to obey his directions. He exhorted them to leave their employments and possessions, and promised to conduct them safely over sea, and bring them into the land of promise. Numbers were so infatuated as to neglect their business, take their wives and little ones, and follow the impostor. When he had led them to a promontory, he ordered them to throw themselves into the sea. Those, who were at the brink of the precipice, leaped down, and many of them perished. Others would have shared the same fate, had not a number of fishermen been present, who saved their lives. These, enlightened at length by experience, prohibited the others from making the leap. They all then sought the impostor, in order to destroy him; but he instantly made his escape, and many of the Cretian Jews, disgusted with his conduct, and convinced that blindness had happened to Israel, were on this occasion brought over to the Christian faith.

Heresies continued during this century to distract the church; the appearance of things was even disgusting; the prospect grew worse and worse; doctrinal feuds and malignant passions corroded the vitals of practical religion, and involved the whole in darkness and guilt.

CENTURY VI.

CHAP. I.

THE LIFE OF FULGENTIUS, AND THE STATE OF THE CHURCH IN THIS CENTURY.

In the year 496, a storm began again to hover over the African churches. Thrasamond commenced his reign at that time ; and was as obstinate an Arian as Huneric, though more sagacious, and less bloody.— He mingled the arts of severity and gentleness against the orthodox, strove to gain them by lucrative motives, and, at the same time, forbade the ordination of bishops in the vacant churches. However, the African bishops evinced by their conduct, that divine grace had not forsaken them ; unanimously determined not to obey an order, which threatened the destruction of gospel truth ; and proceeded to ordain bishops, and fill the vacant sees. Thrasamond, enraged, determined to banish them all. Fulgentius had just been chosen bishop of Ruspæ. A short review of his life and works will afford a specimen of the power of divine grace, victoriously struggling under all the disadvantages of monastic superstition, and the childish ignorance of a barbarous age.

Fulgentius descended from a noble family in Carthage. He received a liberal education at Constantinople ; and there his mind became stored with Greek and Roman learning.

As he advanced in age, he gradually became serious ; was more and more inclined to a monastic life ; prepared himself for it by excessive austerities, and was at length received into the monastery at Faustus.

He sustained severe bodily sufferings from the renewal of the Arian persecution; and was, at one time, so cruelly beaten with clubs, that the pain became almost insupportable. Some time after, he sailed into Syracuse, then visited Rome; and on seeing king Theodoric in the midst of a magnificent assembly, reflected: "If men in this life, while in the pursuit of vanity, attain such dignity, what will be the glory of saints, who seek true honor in the New-Jerusalem?"

Fulgentius was finally elected bishop of *Ruspæ* in Africa; but during the Arian persecution, was banished into Sardinia, in company with two hundred and twenty faithful witnesses of orthodoxy. Thrasamond exerted himself to overcome the constancy of Christians, and delighted to ensnare them with captious questions. He sent for Fulgentius, who came to Carthage, and by his skill in argument, and readiness in answering questions, excited the king's admiration; till through the advice of the Arian clergy, who considered the presence of Fulgentius dangerous at Carthage, he was remanded to Sardinia.

In the year 523, Hilderic succeeded Thrasamond, favored the orthodox party, put a total end to the persecution, and restored Fulgentius to his see. He lived among his flock from that time to his death, eminent for piety, humility and charity. For nearly seventy days during his last sickness, in which he suffered extreme bodily pain, his constant prayer was, "Lord give me patience here, and rest hereafter." He died at length, as he had lived, an edifying example of Christian virtue.

In his writings, he evinces his belief in the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel, particularly, the total alienation of the heart from God, dependence on sovereign grace, the necessity of faith in Christ, and the Deity of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

In the former part of this century, the church in the West wore a dismal aspect. In the East the prospect was far more disagreeable. Factions and feuds, heretical perversions, and scandalous enormities fill up the scene. Under the emperor Justin, Christianity began at length, to wear a more agreeable aspect; and peace, and good order, were, in a measure, restored to the church.

During this reign the Christians, in Arabia Felix, were cruelly persecuted, by a king called Dounouas, a Jew, who caused all those who were unwilling to become Jews to be cast into pits full of fire. The king of Abyssinia invaded the territories of this cruel persecutor, subdued his country, slew him, and delivered the Arabian Christians.

On the death of Justin, Justinian succeeded at Constantinople, in the year 527. He was then forty-five years old, and reigned thirty-nine. Few princes are known whose real character and ostensible, were so different. If one judge by externals, he appears one of the wisest, most pious, and most prosperous of men. He reunited Africa and Italy to the Roman empire; was incessantly employed in religious acts and ceremonies; honored persons reputed holy, built sumptuous churches; endowed monasteries; was indefatigable in public affairs; rooted out idolatry from obscure corners; and brought over a number of barbarous kings and nations to the profession of Christianity.

But notwithstanding all this, he appears to have been in religion, the slave of superstition; in morality, the slave of avarice. The evils which he wrought were palpable. Dissensions, and schisms, forced conversions, the miserable declension of internal godliness, the increase of superstition, ignorance, and practical wickedness, were the undoubted consequences of Justinian's schemes.

This man attempted too much; he pressed uniformity of doctrine through the world; labored to bring all nations to a nominal attachment to Christianity; prescribed what bishops and laity should believe; and was, in effect, the pope as well as the emperor of the Roman world.

Justinian, in his old age, formed the opinion, that the body of Christ was incorruptible. Having embraced the sentiment, he by an edict required the same of his subjects. Eutychius of Constantinople, sensible that this was not the doctrine of the Apostles, refused the publication of it. But the imperial mandate was stronger than the arguments of the bishop. He was roughly treated, banished from his see, and died in exile. While the old imperial Pope was dictating the sentence of banishment against Anastasius and other prelates, he was seized with the stroke of death, and was succeeded by Justin, who recalled the bishops whom the late emperor had exiled.

In the year 529 a council, memorable for its evangelical spirit, was held at Orange in France with Cæsarius at its head. He had tasted the doctrine of Augustine concerning grace, and was therefore zealous for its propagation. Thirteen bishops composed the council. A passage or two from its canons, express in substance, the sentiments of these holy men. "Adam's sin," say they, "did not only hurt the body, but the soul. The being cleansed from sin, and the beginning of our faith, are not owing to ourselves, but to grace. We are not able, by our own natural strength, to do or think any thing, which may conduce to our salvation. We believe that Abel, Noah, Abraham, and the Fathers, have not had that faith, by nature, that St. Paul commendeth in them, but by grace."

Thus a plain testimony was at that time given to vital religion, and the work of the divine Spirit flour-

ished in the neighbourhood of Orange, and in the vicinity of the Rhone.

Toward the close of the century, the Lombards came from Pannonia into Italy, and settled there, under Albonius their first king. As they were Arians by profession, heresy again took root in Italy, whose inhabitants were called to endure all the horrors and miseries which a savage and victorious nation could inflict. In Britain there were, at this time, some appearances of godliness. In Spain a revolution was effected, and orthodoxy established, by means of a pious princess. Thus while the gospel was rapidly withdrawing from the East, God left not himself without witness in the more distant parts of the West.

CHAPTER II.

LIFE OF GREGORY.

GREGORY was a Roman by birth, and descended from a noble family. Being religiously disposed, he assumed the monastic habit, and was eminently distinguished by the progress which he made in piety. Having been drawn from the monastery, and ordained to the work of the gospel ministry, he was sent from Rome to Constantinople to transact ecclesiastical affairs.

After his return to Rome, there was so great an inundation of the Tiber, that it flowed upon the walls of the city, threw down monuments and ancient structures, overflowed the granaries of the church, and destroyed prodigious quantities of wheat. Immediately after, an infectious distemper invaded the city. Among the first, Pelagius, the bishop, fell a victim to

its rage. The destruction continued to prevail, and many houses were left without an inhabitant. In this season of distress the people were anxious to choose a bishop in the room of the deceased Pelagius; and by unanimous consent, the election fell upon Gregory. He, with that humility which formed invariably a trait in his character, earnestly refused; loudly proclaimed his own unworthiness; and wrote to Mauritius, the successor of Tiberius, beseeching him to withhold his assent. But instead of withholding his assent, the emperor confirmed his election. In the mean time, the plague continued; and Gregory, however backward to receive the office of a bishop, forgot not the duties of a pastor.

An extract from one of his sermons preached at this time, may give us some idea of his faithfulness. "Beloved brethren," he says, "we ought to have feared the scourge of God before it came; at least, after having felt it, let us tremble. Let grief open to us the passages of conversion, and let the punishment which we feel dissolve the hardness of our hearts. For, to use the prophet's language, 'The sword hath come even into our soul.' Our people, behold, are smitten with a weapon of divine indignation, and each is carried off by the rapid devastation. Languor does not precede death; but death itself, with hasty strides, as you see, outstrips the tardy course of languor. Every person, who is smitten, is carried off before he has opportunity to bewail his sins. Conceive in what state that man will appear before his Judge, who is hurried off in the midst of his sins. Let each of us repent, while we have time to weep, before the sword devours us. Let us call our ways to remembrance. Let us come before his face with confession, and lift up our hearts with our hands to the Lord. Truly he gives to our trembling hearts a confidence, who proclaims by the prophet, 'I would not the death of a sinner, but rather that he be converted and live.' "

Public worship was concluded at this time, by the performance of a litany; and in one hour during this season of divine service, eighty persons died of the plague.

Gregory persisted in praying and preaching, till the plague ceased; and was all the while as eager to avoid the honors of the episcopal office, as he was to discharge the duties of it. He even attempted to make his escape; but the gates were watched, and his flight for a time prevented. Finally he found means to be conveyed in a wicker basket out of the city, and concealed himself three days. The zealous search of the people at length discovered him, and he was compelled to enter upon his bishopric in the year 590.

Gregory continued to discharge the duties of his office, and gave himself, so far as he could, to the care of souls. Humility and the fear of God were his ruling dispositions.

The melancholy circumstances of his accession corresponded with the gloomy state of the church: the East, almost universally fallen, the West, tarnished with superstition and a variety of wickedness. The ferocious Lombards rendered the whole period of his episcopacy disastrous beyond measure.

He found time to expound the Scriptures, to perform the duties of a sedulous pastor, and to write much for the instruction of mankind. So deeply was he impressed with the prospects and hopes of immortality, that when oppressed with bodily infirmities, and in time of public perplexity, he could pursue a course of arduous labors, with patient and unremitting attention,

A few extracts from his letters will assist the reader in forming a judgment of this great man. He reminds the prætor of Sicily, whose duty it was to send corn from that fruitful granary of the empire, to be just and equitable in his dealings, to remember that life is short, that he must soon appear before the

Judge of all; that he can carry none of his gains with him, and that only the causes and methods of his gains will follow him to judgment.

Boniface, bishop of Rhegium, he handsomely reproved for boasting of the good deeds he had done. He warns him to take care, that he do not mar the whole by ostentation, and adds, "What are we, dust and ashes, that we should covet the praise of men! Him, you should please, whose coming we expect, and whose retribution knows no end."

Speaking of his bodily sufferings to another friend, he says, "What ought we to do, but to call our sins to remembrance, and to thank God that he purifies us by affliction in our flesh. Let us take care, that we pass not from one degree of torment to another; and let us consider the goodness of God who threatens us with death, that he may imprint in us an edifying fear of judgment. How many sinners have continued immersed in sin through life, and have suddenly been cast into hell!" He thus concludes, "May the Lord infuse into your soul these words, by the inspiration of his spirit; cleanse you from your iniquities; give you here the joy of his consolation, and eternal reward hereafter."

At this period the peace of the church was much disturbed by John, bishop of Constantinople, who assumed the title of universal bishop. The pride and arrogance, with which he assumed it, were only equalled by the obstinacy with which he persevered. Gregory wrote with much vehemence against his haughtiness, laid down some memorable rules of humility, and at the same time, laid the foundation of Popery, by manifesting high and unscriptural views of his own see, and of its relation to St. Peter. Gregory very innocently tolerated images in the church. He allowed people to make use of them as pieces of history, to instruct their minds in the great facts of Christianity; and at the same time, gave serious cau-

tion against paying any adoration to them. This well meant advice, however, was the means of much evil, and terminated in the most flagrant idolatry.

Notwithstanding the eminent piety, integrity, and humility of Gregory, his character has been arraigned with great severity, on account of his conduct in the latter part of his life. He has been accused of great ingratitude toward the excellent and virtuous emperor Mauritius, and of egregious flattery toward another, who was profligate and tyrannical.

A series of events excited in Gregory a strong prejudice against the government of Mauritius. Avarice was the predominant feature of his character. This prevailed so much as to eclipse all his excellencies. Having seen the afflictive and suffering condition of his subjects, Gregory interceded for them in vain. Perceiving that their grievances were not redressed, he did not hesitate boldly to reprove the emperor, and condemn his impious conduct.

One specimen of his avarice shall suffice. Shagan, king of a Scythian nation, offered for a ransom comparatively small, to liberate some thousands of prisoners. But Mauritius would not part with his money, and the barbarian in a rage massacred them all. The emperor, though covetous, was not inhuman; he was struck with horror at the news, and besought God that his punishment might be in this life, and not in the next. The following circumstances show that his prayer, at least in part, was answered. Having by his avaricious conduct alienated the affection of his soldiers, they rebelled against him, and elevated Phocas, a centurion, to the imperial throne. Mauritius fled, but was seized, and inhumanly murdered with his wife and family. Five of his sons were slain in his sight, before he himself received the fatal stroke. The little spark of divine grace, which for years seems to have maintained a dubious existence in his heart, was fanned into a flame by the keen blast of

affliction. He bore the scene with silent resignation, repeating only, as each of his children was butchered, "Righteous art thou, O Lord, and true are thy judgments."

Phocas was a monster of wickedness; but Gregory, undoubtedly ignorant of his real character, wrote him a letter of congratulation, and exults in the prospect of a wise, just, and pious administration.

Whoever reads the story at large, will be convinced that Gregory was conscientious in all this, and influenced by motives truly benevolent.

GREGORY'S CONDUCT WITH REGARD TO ENGLAND.

This, also, has been a source of much accusation against the Roman prelate. Protestant writers, in their zeal against Popery, have ascribed to him a domineering spirit, and unjustly accused him with the bitterest acrimony.

For nearly a century and a half, the gospel had been declining in Great Britain; and though the form of Christianity remained, the power of it had become almost extinct.

Gregory, before his consecration at Rome, walking one day in the forum, saw a number of very handsome youth exposed to sale. He made particular inquiry respecting them, and was informed, that they were Pagans; and came from the Island of Great-Britain. "Alas," said he, deeply sighing, "that the prince of darkness should possess countenances so luminous; and that so fair a front should carry minds destitute of eternal life." Impressed with the importance of the object, he earnestly entreated the Roman bishop to send a missionary to that island, offered himself as one ready for the task; and nothing but the officiousness of the Roman citizens, and their fond attachment to Gregory, prevented the work at that time.

It was the character of Gregory to pursue, with unwearyed attention, any benevolent plan which he had once conceived ; and in the year 595, a few years after his consecration at Rome, he actually sent missionaries into England. They were a number of monks, at the head of whom was Augustine.

A remarkable concurrence of providential circumstances facilitated the work, and gave it a more expeditious success than might have been expected from appearances. It is very observable, that the Lord frequently makes use of females in the propagation of the gospel among idolaters. Two queens were concerned in this work. One of them in particular, called Bertha, was a character, on which the mind will dwell with pleasure. She had married Ethelbert, king of Kent, one of the most wise and powerful of the Saxon princes. Her principles were firm and sound, her piety ardent, her conduct worthy of the Christian name, and her influence over her husband considerable. All these things conspired to favor the missionaries.

Ethelbert assigned them a habitation in the isle of Thanet. They soon informed him, that they came from Rome, and brought the best tidings in the world ; eternal life to those who received them, and endless enjoyments with the living and true God. They soon received a visit from the king, and preached to him and his attendants. The king could not at first assent to their doctrine, but received them in a friendly manner, assigned them a mansion in the royal city of Canterbury, and gave them permission to preach the gospel.

The conduct of the missionaries was correspondent to their profession. They prayed, fasted, watched, preached the word, lived as men above the world, and shewed a readiness to suffer or even to die for the truth.

Near the city was an old church, to which queen Bertha was accustomed to resort for prayer. In this,

the missionaries first held their meetings, and labored with unremitting ardor, till the king himself was converted to the truth. They then obtained a large license for preaching, and were permitted to rebuild and repair churches. The king received baptism, was delighted with the preciousness of the gospel promises, and affectionately congratulated the new converts as heirs of the grace of life.

Augustine went into France, and was ordained archbishop of the English nation. Returning to England, he sent Laurentius the presbyter, and Peter the monk, to acquaint Gregory with his success, and to receive answers to various questions. Gregory answered the queries of Augustine, and formed a plan of ecclesiastical government, in which there was a uniformity, and subordination, bordering on Popery.

Gregory wrote to Ethelbert to congratulate, exhort, and instruct him; set before him the example of the great Constantine, and pressed him to extend the propagation of the gospel.

Ethelbert reigned fifty one years, and died in 616. As a statesman, he was great, as a Christian, greater; and few princes, in any age, were richer blessings to their subjects, than Ethelbert and Bertha.

On the whole, Gregory's conduct with respect to England, appears one of the most shining efforts of Christian charity. His missionaries, in general, acted laudably; and the real establishment of Christianity was, under God, effected by their means.

This great prelate worn out, at length, with labors and diseases, slept in Jesus in the year 604. He had enjoyed, or rather endured his bishopric thirteen years and six months. No man in any age ever gave himself up more sincerely to the service of God, and the benefit of his fellow creatures. Power, in him, was a voluntary servitude, undertaken, not for himself, but for the whole world.

CENTURY VII.

CHAP. I.

ENGLAND.

In the century before us, barren and unprofitable as it is for the most part, Great Britain shone with peculiar lustre.

On the death of Augustus, the first bishop of Canterbury, Laurentius succeeded to the see. He trod in the steps of his predecessor, and labored to promote the best interest of the English nation.

However, before the church rose into eminence, the bright prospects of the missionaries were clouded with adversity. While Ethelbert lived, the gospel flourished, but his son and successor, Eadbald not only despised the gospel, but lived a profligate life. But the missionaries persevered in prayer and faith, and the king at last, struck with horror for his crimes, reformed his own life and manners, was baptized, propagated the gospel among his people, and so far as his influence extended, exerted it in the cause of Christ.

The Saxon Heptarchy, consisting of seven small kingdoms, still continued in England. These kingdoms were often at war with each other, and with the native Britons, and exhibited scenes of the most unpleasant nature. Nevertheless, it pleased God, to shew the power of his grace, in that dull period. The gospel was introduced into the North. Edwin the king of that part of the country, embraced Christianity.

He was in good earnest about religion; and at length, held a consultation with his friends and counsellors on this all important subject. Coifi, the Pagan chief priest, said that their religion was of no value; that the more studiously he sought for truth, the less he found it; and that in the new doctrine, which the Christians taught, there appeared truth, which was able to afford life, salvation, and eternal bliss. He then advised, instantly to destroy the temples and altars, which they had served in vain. Accordingly, they profaned the idolatrous temples, and rejoiced in the knowledge of the Most High; and the king, his nobles, and very many of the common people were baptized.

From this time, the gospel rapidly spread from town to town, and from kingdom to kingdom, till praise ascended from various corners of the island. The kings became nursing fathers, and queens nursing mothers to the church. Uncorrupt and humble in the midst of prosperity, they showed themselves the benefactors of the poor and needy, and cheerfully encouraged every attempt to spread the knowledge and practice of godliness.

The gospel flourished at the same time in Ireland; and missionaries, even from that country, were sent to the North of England, and labored with glorious success.

But the zeal and purity of the Christians lasted but about forty or fifty years. The native depravity of man gradually quenched the Spirit of God; and the power of godliness was buried, or very faintly subsisted, in the rubbish of factions, contentions, and worldly lusts. Yet the ancestors of the British nation saw in this century a blessed season, the fruits of which will abide forever.

During this century the northern parts of Europe, which had remained in the darkness of idolatry, were graciously visited by the Most High. The Britons,

Scots, and Irish, were honored as instruments in this work.

Besides the various parts of Germany, missionaries from these places travelled into Friezland, Denmark, and various other regions of the North.

CHAPTER II.

THE GENERAL STATE OF THE CHURCH IN THIS CENTURY.

PHOCAS, the Greek Emperor, was deposed and slain by Heraclius in the year 610. He was one of the most vicious and profligate tyrants, and may be compared with Caligula, Nero, or Domitian. Heraclius, the successor of Phocas, reigned thirty years. In the beginning of his reign the Persians desolated the eastern part of the empire, and made themselves masters of Jerusalem. While Asia groaned under their cruelties and oppressions, and was afflicted with scourge after scourge, John, called the Almoner, bishop of Alexandria, distinguished himself by the exercise of Christian graces.

He daily supplied with necessaries those, who having escaped the Persian arms, flocked into Egypt; sent to Jerusalem the most ample relief for those who remained there; ransomed captives, placed the sick and wounded in hospitals, and visited them in person, two or three times a week.

During this time of uncommon want, the Nile did not rise to its usual height; a barren season ensued; provisions were scarce; and crowds of refugees still poured into Alexandria. John, however, continued his liberal donatives, till he had neither money nor credit. The prayer of faith was his resource; and

he persevered in hope, till a rich supply of provision was sent from the fruitful island of Sicily.

From the beginning of his bishopric, he maintained seven thousand five hundred poor persons by daily alms. He was accessible to them on all occasions, and, what is most material, divine faith influenced his acts of benevolence.

Like Josiah, he seems to have been sent to reform a falling church. He constantly studied the Scriptures; in conversation he was instructive and exemplary, and in preaching interesting and faithful.

In the year 616, John left Alexandria on account of the Persians, and retired to Cyprus. He soon after died as he had lived, an example of piety. With him, ends all that is worth recording of Alexandria.

In the same year, the haughty Chosroes, king of Persia, conquered Alexandria in Egypt, and took Chalcedon. Heraclius, saw the approaching ruin of his empire, and begged for peace. "That I will never consent to," replied the tyrant, "till you renounce him who was crucified, whom you call God, and with me adore the sun." The Lord who is a jealous God, ever confounds his open enemies, and manifests himself the Sovereign of the universe. Chosroes was a second Sennacherib, and was treated as such, by the rightful Disposer of all events.

The spirit of Heraclius was roused; and God gave him wonderful success over the Persian king, who, having lost a greater part of his dominions, was murdered by his own son.

Heresies were still prevalent in the East. At this time flourished the Nestorian and Eutychian heresies, one denying the person, the other confounding the two natures of Jesus Christ. The resistance of the orthodox had but little effect, for want of that energy, and true spiritual life, which in a degree still subsisted in the West. The sound doctrines of grace, the guard of true humility, was an ensign, around

which the truly pious were wont to rally their strength, and ward off the intended blows of the enemy. But in Asia and Egypt, religion was for the most part a heartless speculation.

About the year 630, another heresy appeared, called the Monothelite, which ascribed only one will to Jesus Christ. The ambiguous subtleties of the party, induced the emperor Heraclius to embrace it; and the East was rapidly overspread with this heretical evil.

Sophronius, a disciple of John the Almoner, a man of sincerity and simplicity, with tears bewailed and opposed the innovation, but in vain. Being elected bishop of Jerusalem, he with meekness and wisdom, exerted his authority against the growing heresy; and in a synodical letter, explained with equal solidity and accuracy, the divine and human operations of Jesus Christ, and gave pertinent instances of both.

Thus in this degenerate season, God raised up a man, who understood the truth, and knew how to defend it with sound argument, a charitable spirit, and an holy life.

In the mean time, the heresy spread wider and wider, till even Rome was infested with it. Maximus succeeded Sophronius in the defence of the primitive faith, and with much labor confuted the heresiarchs. Constans, who was then emperor, forbade any part to be taken in the controversy. But Martin, bishop of Rome, excited by the zeal of Maximus, defended that part of the truth which was opposed, and in a council, ventured to anathematize the supporters of the heresy. Constans, in a rage, ordered him to be dragged into the East, and inflicted on him a long protracted and barbarous punishment. Martin, however, continued firm to the last. "As to this wretched body," says he, "the Lord will take care of it. He is at hand; why should I give myself any trouble? For I hope in his mercy; he will not pro-

long my life." He died in the year 655. His extreme sufferings by imprisonment, hunger, fettters, and brutal treatment, call for compassion; his constancy demands respect; and his firm adherence to the doctrines of grace secures the admiration of Christians.

Maximus was also brought to Constantinople, and by order of the emperor underwent a number of examinations. He was asked by an officer, to sign the edict of Constans. "Only do this," said the officer, "believe what you please in your heart." "It is not to the heart alone," replied Maximus, "that God hath confined our duty. We are also obliged, with the mouth to confess Jesus Christ before men." The tyrant, enraged to find himself disappointed, ordered Maximus to be scourged, his tongue to be cut out, his right hand to be cut off, and directed him to be banished and imprisoned the rest of his life. The same punishment was inflicted on two of his disciples. These three were separated from each other, and confined in castles, where no consolation was afforded, except that which belongs to those who suffer for righteousness' sake.

This wicked emperor murdered his own brother, and continued to disgrace the Christian name by his follies, his vices, and cruelties, till he himself was despatched in the year 667.

The victorious arms of Mahomet, the Arian imposter, began at this time to endanger all Christendom. By the assistance of a Jew and renegado Christian, he formed a farrago of doctrines and rites, in which there was a mixture of Judaism, Paganism, and Christianity. In the year 608, he began to declare himself a prophet, and drew over to his party some of the various sorts of men who inhabited Arabia. He increased the number of his followers, partly by indulging them in sensuality, ambition, the love of gain, and the promise of a carnal heaven, but principally by the sword.

This was a season of infatuation, when for the sins of men, empires and kingdoms were permitted to slumber till the invader, at first weak and contemptible, grew to an enormous height. Vice and wretchedness prevailed over the East, in all their hideous forms. A few, indeed, mourned over the times, and adorned the truth by humility and holiness. But no serious opposition was made to the doctrines of Mahomet, and at the time of his death which happened in the year 631, he had conquered the greater part of Arabia.

His followers continued to extend their conquests, and with amazing rapidity overrun Arabia, Persia, Mesopotamia, Chaldea, Syria, Africa; and even Europe suffered from their depredations.

Africa fell under the power of the Mahometans toward the close of this century. It had long shared in the general corruption, and it finally shared in the general punishment. The region, which long refreshed us with evangelical light and energy, where Cyprian suffered, and where Augustine taught, was thus consigned to Mahometan darkness, delusion, and guilt.

If we compare the East and West during this century, we shall see a very striking difference. In England true godliness shone for a considerable part of it. In France, there were visible marks of piety; and from these two kingdoms, divine truth made its way into Germany and the North with glorious success. In Italy, Arianism was on the decline. In Rome, the purity of the faith was, for the greater part, preserved; though it must be acknowledged, that superstition and vice were lamentably on the increase.

In the East, the influence of the Divine Spirit seems to have been almost entirely withheld. Men had there filled up the measure of their iniquities; and the place, where light first arose, was now covered with Egyptian darkness.

CENTURY VIII.

CHAP. I.

VENERABLE BEDE, THE ENGLISH PRESBYTER,

THE history of this century will properly begin with a brief narrative of the life of this historian.

He was born in a village called Farrow, near the mouth of the Tyne. Losing both his parents at the age of seven, he was, by the care of relations, placed in a monastery, and there educated with great strictness. He appeared from his youth, to be devoted to the service of God. At the age of thirty he was ordained presbyter, and considered the greatest man of his age. Prayer, writing, and teaching, were his familiar employments during his whole life. Much occupied in reading and writing, he made all his studies subservient to devotion. As he was sensible that by the grace of God, rather than by natural abilities, the most profitable knowledge of Scripture is acquired, he always mingled prayer with study.

A catalogue of Bede's writings would exhibit a sufficient proof of his amazing industry. Genuine godliness, however, rather than taste and genius, appears in his writings. His church history is very valuable, and his expositions and homilies, must, in that dearth of knowledge, have been abundantly useful.

In his last sickness he was for two or three weeks afflicted with a difficulty of breathing. His mind was

however, serene and cheerful; his affections heavenly; and amidst these infirmities, he daily taught his disciples. A great part of the night was employed in prayer and thanksgiving; and the first employment of the morning was to ruminate on the Scriptures, and to address his God in prayer. "God scourgeth every son whom he receiveth," was frequently in his mouth. Perceiving his end to draw near, he said, "If my Maker please, I will go to him from the flesh, who, when I was not, formed me out of nothing. My soul desires to see Christ my King in his beauty." He sang glory to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and expired with a sedateness, composure, and devotion, that amazed all who saw and heard.

The real nature of the gospel, and its practical exercise in faith, humility, and true mortification of sin, were understood, and felt by this Saxon presbyter. Bede, who felt, abhorred, and sincerely struggled with indwelling sin, was conscious of its unutterable malignity, and humble under this conviction.

CHAPTER II.

SOME FARTHER ACCOUNT OF THE MAHOMETANS.

In the year 713 the Mahometans extended their conquests to Spain, and there terminated the kingdom of the Goths, which had lasted nearly 300 years. The professed Christians in that place, were reduced to slavery; and thus were scourged those wicked professors, who held the truth in unrighteousness; called on the name of Christ, while in works they denied him; and buried the faith under an enormous load of superstition.

No strong efforts were made to withstand the Arabian conquerors, till they had made very great advancements towards universal empire; had marched into the very heart of France, and ravaged that country in a dreadful manner. In the year 732, they were totally defeated by the heroic Charles Martel—an event, memorable in history, because by the providence of God it stopped the ravages of these Arabian locusts.

CHAPTER III.

CONTROVERSY OF IMAGES.

THE marvellous propensity of all ages to the sin of idolatry, evidently originates in a native principle existing in fallen man.

The guilt of idolatry is not so apparent to the natural conscience, as that of crimes committed against our fellow creatures; though no other sin is so much spoken against in the Old Testament. But whoever considers, that it implies a departure of the heart from God, and fixing it on something else, and understands that it pours all possible contempt on the Divine Majesty, will not wonder at God's indignation against this sin; will see that it naturally operates in the human mind, and that it affords a complete demonstration of the apostasy of man.

The ancient people of God were distinguished from the nations around them by the most express prohibition of this sin; under the gospel dispensation, the same prohibition was continued, and for several centuries there was but little occasion to dwell on the subject. For while the minds of men were filled with

peace and joy in believing, while the doctrines of justification and regeneration were precious and all important in their eyes, while they lived by the faith of Jesus, saw his glory, and felt in their own souls the transforming power of his grace, the deceitful aids of idolatry had no charms. But when the knowledge of the gospel was darkened and adulterated, the miserable spirits of men had recourse to such vain refuges.— Towards the end of the fourth century, some approaches toward this evil, appeared in professors of Christianity ; in the fifth century it increased ; and at the close of the sixth, images began to appear in the church, though they were not then worshipped as idols. Men gradually lost the divine way of applying to God through Christ, and began to rely on idols. In this respect, the Western church advanced more rapidly in corruption, than the Eastern. Idolatry gradually gained ground, as the simplicity and purity of the Christian faith decayed ; and as there was no effectual knowledge of the gospel to dispel the clouds of error, the evil finally became incurable.

The East and West were divided in opinion on this subject ; and the crisis finally arose, when the Christian world was broken into two great parties on the question.

In the year 727, Leo, the Greek emperor, began openly to oppose the worship of idols, and commenced hostilities against the bishop of Rome. But so strangely were mankind infatuated with the love of idols, that the emperor was violently opposed, and a foundation was laid for the temporal power of the Roman prelate. To this contest about images is generally traced the origin of popedom. By popery is meant the religion of the church of Rome. Whoever governed that church from time to time was called the Pope. By his temporal power, he supported false doctrines, particularly that which deserves the name of idolatry.— He is that monster of wickedness, who considered

himself the head of the church, and exalted himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped.

He, who filled the Romish see at that time, was Gregory II., who for his open defence and support of idolatry, is called the first pope of Rome.

Leo, convinced in his judgment of what was right, and zealous to propagate it, assembled the people; and with that frankness and sincerity, which ever marked his character, publicly avowed his conviction of the idolatry of the growing practice; and declared, that images ought not to be erected for adoration. But the true nature of Christ's atonement was so little understood and relished, that the emperor was in the minority, through the whole Christian world; and his subjects murmured against him as a tyrant and a persecutor.

Leo rejected relics and the intercession of saints, and in the year 730 published an edict against images. In a porch belonging to the palace of Constantinople, there was an image of Christ on the cross. Perceiving that it had been made an engine of idolatry, Leo sent an officer to pull it down. Several women were present, and entreated that it might be spared, but in vain. The officer mounted a ladder and struck three blows with a hatchet on the face of the figure. The woman, who stood looking on, threw him down by pulling away the ladder, and murdered him on the spot.

Leo put several persons to death, who were concerned in the murder; and such was finally the triumph of idolatry, that the murderers are to this day honored as martyrs by the Greek church. The news flew to Rome; Italy was thrown into confusion; serious attempts were made to elect another emperor; Gregory fomented the rebellion, and in the end, established the temporal power of his successors on the ruin of the imperial authority.

He was soon succeeded by Gregory III., who wrote in such arrogant terms to the emperor that he refus-

ed to have any farther intercourse with him. Gregory and Leo both died in the year 741, and left to their successors the management of their views, and contentions.

The Arabians, in the mean time, persecuted in the East with unrelenting barbarity ; and the real church of God was desolated on all sides, and suffered equally from enemies within and without.

Zacrary, the successor of Gregory, wrote to the dukes of France, exhorting them to succour St. Peter ; promising them the remission of their sins, an hundred fold in this world, and in the world to come life everlasting. So ingulſed were the French in ignorance and superstition, that to secure the remission of their sins, they annexed large dominions to the church of Rome ; and Pepin, the king of France, became the great supporter of the popedom. From this time the pope not only assumed the tone of infallibility and spiritual dominion, but became literally a temporal prince.

CHAPTER IV.

PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL.

THE Irish excelled in divinity at this time, travelled through various countries, and became renowned for knowledge. In England and France some glimmerings of light still existed; but it is in the propagation of the gospel in this century, that the real church is chiefly to be seen. The same popes, who opposed the grace of God in their own country, supported pious missionaries among the Heathen.

Willibrod, who with other missionaries, went into Friezeland in the seventh century, continued to labour there with success.

For fifty years, he was employed in this work, and was the means of turning many from idols, to serve the living and true God.

The great light of Germany in this century was Winfrid, an Englishman, born about the year 680.— He resided in the monastery of Nutchell, where he became acquainted with sacred and profane learning. At the age of thirty, he was ordained priest, labored with much zeal in preaching the word of God, and longed to be employed as a missionary. About the year 716, in company with two monks, he went over into Friezeland, and watered where Willibròd had planted. But finding that circumstances rendered it impracticable for him to continue there, he returned to England.

With recommendatory letters from the bishop of Winchester, he went to Rome, presented himself to the pope, and expressed a desire of being employed in the conversion of infidels. The pope encouraged his zeal, and gave him a commission of the most ample and unlimited nature.

With this commission he went into Bavaria, and Thuringia. In the former part of his ministry he reformed the churches ; in the latter he was successful in the conversion of infidels.

With sincere delight, he learned that a door was opened for his return to Friezeland ; he immediately set out for that country, and during three years co-operated with Willibròd. The pale of the church was hence enlarged, churches were erected, many received the word of God, and idolatry was more and more subdued.

Willibròd, declining in old age, chose Winfrid for his successor. But the latter refused the offer, because the pope had enjoined him to preach in Germany. Willibròd acquiesced in Winfrid's desires, and dismissed him with a blessing. The younger missionary departed immediately, and came into Hesse. He erect-

ed the standard of truth throughout that vicinity, and supported it with much zeal, to the confusion of the kingdom of Satan. It ought not to be denied that he suffered much hardship, supported himself, at times, by the labor of his own hands, and was exposed to eminent peril from the rage of obstinate pagans.

After some time he returned to Rome, was kindly received by Gregory II., and consecrated bishop of the new German churches, under the name of Boniface. Gregory, solicitous to preserve his dignity, exacted from the new bishop an oath of subjection to the papal authority. Boniface, armed with letters from the pope, and encouraged with fresh laborers from England, returned to the scene of his ministry.

In the year 732 Boniface received the title of archbishop, and encouraged with letters from Rome, he proceeded to erect new churches, and extend the gospel. He was finally fixed at Mentz; and is commonly called archbishop of that city.

Many persons, while in obscure life, have professed much zeal for the service of God; but have declined in earnestness, as they advanced in age and dignity. This was not the case with Boniface; though oppressed with age, and infirmity, and greatly revered through the whole Christian world, he continued zealous for the conversion of the Friezelanders, returned into that country, and was an instrument of good to many perishing souls. Before his departure, he conducted, in all respects, as though he had a presentiment of his approaching death. Having labored there for a season, he appointed a day to confirm those whom he had baptized. While waiting for them, he and his followers encamped on the banks of a river; but to their surprise they beheld, not the new converts, whom they had expected, but a troop of angry pagans, armed with shields and lances. The servants went out to resist; but Boniface, with calm intrepidity, said to his followers: "Children forbear to fight;

the scripture forbids us to render evil for evil. The day, which I have long waited for, is come; hope in God, and he will save your souls." Thus did he prepare the priests and the rest of the company for martyrdom. The pagans attacked them furiously, and slew the whole company, fifty-two in number, besides Boniface himself. This happened in the year 755 in the seventy-fifth year of his age.

Other missionaries might be mentioned, who did honor to themselves, and the cause of truth. Villehad, bishop of Bremen, was called the Apostle of Saxony. He underwent great hazards, overcame the ferocious spirits of the infidels, and spread among them the knowledge of the gospel. In his dying moments he said to his weeping friends, "Withhold me not from going to God. These sheep I recommend to him, who intrusted them with me, and whose mercy is able to protect them."

This was an age of missionaries. Their character and their success, form, indeed, almost the only shining feature in this century.

CENTURY IX.

CHAP. I.

GENERAL STATE OF RELIGION IN THIS CENTURY.

WE are now penetrating into a region of darkness, and a land of deserts and pits, a land of drought and the shadow of death. By every step we are carried into scenes still more gloomy than the former. Here and there indeed a glimmering ray of the Sun of Righteousness appears. But it is in vain that we look for any steady lustre of evangelical truth and holiness.

The several circumstances which attended the thick darkness that pervaded this century, may be reduced to the following heads; the preference given to human writings above the Scriptures, the domination of the popedom, the accumulation of ceremonies, and the oppression of the godly.

It was then customary to explain Scripture entirely by the writings of the fathers. No man was permitted, with impunity, to vary in the least from their decisions. The great apostolic rule of interpreting Scripture by Scripture, was in a manner lost. It was deemed sufficient, that such a renowned doctor had given such an interpretation. Hence the sacred volume, through long neglect and disuse, was considered obscure and perplexed, and quite unfit for popular reading.

The popedom continued to gain strength; and ignorance and superstition were so prevalent, that whoever opposed the bishop of Rome, drew on himself a host of enemies.

Ceremonies accumulated with amazing rapidity; and their observance was considered essential to salvation. Hence mankind were ingulfed in the depth of ignorance; and persons of eminence suppressed, in the bud, every attempt to instruct mankind.

In Asia, Mahometanism still reigned; and, except the Pauliciahs, scarcely a vestige of godliness appeared in the Eastern church. During the whole of this century, there was neither an emperor, nor a bishop of Rome, nor of Constantinople, who deserves particular notice, either on account of vital Christian knowledge or practical piety. In this dark period the absurd tenet of transubstantiation was introduced by Pascasius Radbert.

In France, the doctrines of divine grace were nearly eclipsed. Ado, archbishop of Vienna, was however, an eminent exception to this account. He was indefatigable in pressing the great truths of salvation, attended closely to discipline, instructed the ignorant, sympathized with the penitent, and was a real friend to the poor, both in a temporal and spiritual sense.

In England the decline of godliness was grievous. The whole nation seemed enveloped in darkness.

Charlemagne of France flourished in the last century, and died in the former part of this. The splendid sins of this emperor cannot here be recoufited. He revived the Western empire in Germany, was an instrument of extending the visible church, and fixed the power of the popedom on the strongest foundation.

CHAPTER II.

THE PAULICIANS.

ABOUT the year 660 a new sect arose called the Paulicians, supposed to have taken their name from the Apostle Paul. Constantine, a person who dwelt in an obscure town in Samosata, entertained a deacon who had been carried captive by the Mahometans. This deacon presented him with the New Testament. Constantine made the best use of the deacon's present; studied it, exercised his own understanding upon it, formed a system of divinity, and became the founder of a sect called the Paulicians.

This sect held the common orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, were perfectly free from image worship, scriptural in the use of the sacraments, disregarded relics and all the fashionable equipage of superstition, and knew no other Mediator but the Lord Jesus Christ.

Constantine preached with great success; and Pontus and Cappadocia, regions once renowned for Christian piety, were again enlightened through his labors. He and his associates were distinguished from the rest of the clergy of that day, by their scriptural names, modest titles, zeal, knowledge, activity, and holiness. Their congregations were diffused over the provinces of Asia Minor. Roused by the growing importance of the sect, the Greek emperors began to persecute them with the most sanguinary severity; and under Christian names and forms, re-acted the scenes of Galerius and Maximin.

A Greek officer, named Simeon, armed with imperial authority, came to Colonia, and apprehended Constantine and a number of his followers. Stones were put into the hands of his disciples, and they were required to kill their pastor, as the price of

their forgiveness. A person named Justin was the only one of the number who obeyed. He stoned to death his spiritual father, and signalized himself still more by betraying his brethren. Simeon struck no doubt with the evidences apparent in the sufferers, embraced the faith, which he came to destroy, renounced the world, preached the gospel, and died a martyr. For a hundred and thirty years these servants of God underwent the horrors of persecution, with Christian meekness, and patience. During all this time, the divine Spirit was apparent among them, and they rendered both to God and to Cæsar their due.

This afflicted people had a short release from suffering, till at length, Theodora exerted herself with the greatest violence against them. Her inquisitors ransacked Lesser Asia in search of them, and she is computed to have killed by the gibbet, by fire, and by sword, a hundred thousand.

If the Paulicians had continued to sustain these cruelties with a Christian temper, similar consequences might have been expected. But faith and patience failed at length, and they were gradually betrayed into a secular spirit.

For more than 180 years, they shone as lights in the world; exemplified the real gospel by a life of faith, hope and charity, and by the preservation of the truth in a patient course of suffering. Let Christians believe, rejoice in God, patiently suffer, return good for evil, and look for true riches and honor in the world to come.

CHAPTER III.

OPPOSITION TO THE CORRUPTIONS OF POPERY.

We have seen the light of divine truth shedding its kindly influence in the East. Let us now behold the reviving power of its beams in the West. We shall not see it generally illuminating this great division of the Christian world, but only shining in some particular districts. The absolute power of the pope, the worship of images, and the invocation of saints and angels, as in the last century, continued to be opposed by several princes and ecclesiastics. A council at Paris, held in the year 824, agreed with the council of Frankfort in the prohibition of image worship. Agobard, archbishop of Lyons, wrote against the corruptions of popery, and maintained that there is no other Mediator between God and man, except Jesus Christ, who is both God and man.

Claudius, bishop of Turin, is a character worthy to be held in high estimation; and seems to stand the first in order of time among the reformers.

He was born in Spain; in his early years was a chaplain to the court of Lewis the Meek; and was reputed to have had great knowledge of the Scriptures. Lewis perceiving the ignorance of a great part of Italy, and willing to provide the churches of Piedmont with a pastor, who might stem the growing torrent of image worship, promoted Claudio to the see of Turin, about the year 817. He was eminently useful in this new station. By his writings he copiously expounded the Scriptures, and by his preaching, he laboriously instructed the people. His mind was ardent; and he had a charitable zeal for divine truth and for the salvation of souls. He affirms that Jesus Christ is the only proper head of the church; is severe against the doctrines of human merit; main-

tains, that we are to be saved by faith alone ; holds the fallibility of the church ; exposes the futility of praying for the dead, and the sinfulness of the idolatrous practices, then supported by the Romans.

The labors of Claudius were not in vain. He checked the growing evil, at least in his own diocese ; and in the valleys of Piedmont the fruits of his labors were seen for centuries. Hence it is probable that the churches of the Waldenses either originated or received much increase and confirmation from his labors.

The case of Gotteschalcus shows, that a divine was not permitted, at this time, to promulgate the sentiments of Augustine with impunity. He was born in Germany. From early life, he had been a monk, and devoted himself to theological inquiries. He was peculiarly fond of the writings of Augustine, and entered, with much zeal, into his sentiments.

About the year 846 he left his monastery, went into Dalmatia and Pannonia, and there spread the doctrines of Augustine. On this account, he was condemned as a heretic, dragged from the priesthood; beaten with rods, and imprisoned. The injured pastor maintained with his last breath, the doctrine for which he suffered, and died in prison in the year 870.

Even in that age, there wanted not men, who remonstrated loudly against the barbarity, with which he had been treated. Remigius archbishop of Lyons, distinguished himself among these ; and in a council held at Valence, in the year 855, both Gotteschalcus and his doctrines were defended. Two subsequent councils confirmed the decrees of this. Thus it appears, that there were, at least, a small number of persons, to whom Christ and his grace were precious ; and the influence of evangelical truth was so strongly imprinted on their hearts, that all the cruelty, activity, and artifice, of subtle enemies, were not able to snuff it.

CHAPTER IV.

PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL IN THIS CENTURY.

BOTH the East, and West, were in this century, full of idolatry and darkness ; and seemed to vie with each other in supporting the kingdom of Satan. Providence, however, made use of the ambitious pontiffs of Rome and Constantinople for the more extensive propagation of the gospel.

Cyril of Thessalonica became one of the most active and useful missionaries of this century ; and Providence opened to him a door of solid utility among the idolatrous nations.

In compliance with the request of several princes, Cyril went from place to place, and labored with great patience, fidelity, and success.

In the mean time Nicolas of Rome, and Photius of Constantinople, were acrimoniously inveighing against one another, and striving, each to secure to himself the obedience of the new converts.

It appears, that the Russians, hitherto barbarous and savage, received, in this century, a Christian bishop, and began to be instructed in the knowledge of the gospel. Some traces of godliness still remained in the countries which were evangelized during the last century. Two or three extracts from Haymo, a bishop in Saxony, will show what doctrines were then preached in that country.

“ Man of himself departing from God, returns not of himself to God. God works all in all ; by which words human arrogance is removed ; since, without the holy Spirit, our weakness can effect no real good, whether great or small.”

“ We are not only unable to effect any good, without Divine grace and mercy preceding and following us, but even to think any. For the grace of God prevents us, that we may be willing, and follows us,

that we may be able. Every good thing that we have, the good will and the good works, is not from ourselves, but from God."

Haymo continued bishop twelve years, and died in the year 853:—A rare light, which shone in the midst of darkness.

In Holland some evidences of the power of divine truth still continued. If we look toward the north of Europe, we shall see that divine Providence began to pave the way for the propagation of the gospel in the frozen regions of Scandinavia, and on the shores of the Baltic. These regions had hitherto been enveloped in the most deplorable darkness of paganism.

Adelard, cousin to Charlemagne, was a bright luminary in the Christian world at the commencement of this century. At the age of twenty he became monk of Corbie in Picardy, and was finally chosen abbot of that monastery. His imperial relation obliged him to reside a part of the time at court; but whether at court or in the monastery, in prosperity or adversity, he was the same humble, pious, and devout Christian. While at the monastery, he every week addressed each of the monks individually, exhorted them in pathetic discourses, and labored for the spiritual good of the surrounding country.

Another Adelard, who governed the monastery during his absence, founded a distinct monastery called New Corbie. This was designed as a nursery for evangelical students, who might there prepare themselves to instruct the northern regions. The success of this truly charitable institution was very great. Learned and zealous missionaries issued from that seminary, who enlightened the dark regions of the North.

Anscarius was a monk of Old Corbie. He was a man of understanding and integrity, peculiarly fitted for the work of a missionary, and desirous to suffer the sake of Christ. His wishes were made known

to the Emperor, who appointed him a mission to Denmark. Much pains were taken to dissuade him from going; but in vain. He persisted in his resolution, and manifested a readiness to expose himself among strangers, barbarians, and pagans. While preparations were making for his voyage, he devoted himself wholly to reading and prayer.

He set out with his fellow missionaries, and in the early part of the century, arrived at Sweden. They were favorably received by the king, permitted to remain in the country, and allowed to preach the gospel. Success attended their pious endeavors; they gained over many pagans; brought up children in the Christian faith and redeemed captives; and Christianity by their means, made great progress in Sweden.

Anscarius finally gained footing in Denmark, and planted the gospel there with some success. Although he was called to repeated hardships and privations, he persevered with unwearied patience in the work of his mission.

In the year 865 this apostle of the North was called to rest. Sweden and Denmark were, under God, indebted to him for the first light of the gospel. He applied himself to the duties of his office with indefatigable assiduity. A terror to the proud, and a comfort to the humble, he knew how to divide the word of truth, and to give to each of his flock a portion in due season. In all good works, particularly in his care of redeeming captives, he was eminently distinguished. It is remarked of him, that he never did any thing without first recommending himself to God in prayer.

What but the genuine love of God in Christ, could afford him such faith in divine Providence, and enable him to persevere in hardships, and be so active for the souls of men?

CENTURY X.

CHAP. I.

GENERAL STATE OF THE CHURCH IN THIS CENTURY.

THE famous annalist of the Roman church, whose partiality to that see is notorious, has, however, the candor to own, that this was an iron age, barren of all godliness ; a leaden age, abounding in all wickedness ; a dark age, remarkable above all others for scarcity of writers and men of learning.

Infidel malice has with pleasure recorded the vices and crimes of the popes in this century. Nor will any one attempt to palliate the accounts of their wickedness. It was as deep and atrocious as language can paint.

The general description of the church at this time can be little else than a very succinct account of the means made use of to oppose the progress of popery.

The decrees of the council of Frankfort against image worship continued to have some influence in Germany, France and England. Opposition was also made by kings and councils to the authority of the pope. One of the most remarkable instances of this kind took place in the council of Rheims ; where a bishop was deposed without the consent of the pope. A few words of the president of that council deserve to be distinctly quoted. " O deplorable Rome, who in the days of our forefathers producedst so many burning and shining lights ! thou hast brought forth in our days, only dismal darkness, worthy the detestation

of posterity. What shall we do, or what counsels shall we take? The gospel tells us of a barren fig-tree, and of the Divine patience exercised toward it. Let us bear with our primates, as long as we can; and in the mean time seek spiritual food, where it can be found. Certainly there are some in this holy assembly, who can testify that in Belgium in Germany there may be found real pastors and eminent men of learning. What think you, reverend fathers, of this man, the pope, placed on a shining throne, glittering with purple and gold? Whom do you account him? If destitute of love, and puffed up with pride, he is Antichrist; sitting in the temple of God." He goes on to lament, that the princes of the earth were committing fornication with the Roman harlot, and giving their power to support her grandeur.

These and similar magnanimous struggles for Christian light and liberty were not wholly in vain. The Spirit of God evidently continued with the recent churches of Germany and the North; and France itself was, by no means, destitute of men, who feared God and served him in the gospel of his Son.

Rome continued to sink deeper in the mire of iniquity; and not only moral virtue itself, but even the appearance of it was lost in the métropolis. The church was trampled on by the most unworthy prelates; and immersed in profanehess, sensuality; and lewdness. Otho I. of Germany went to Rome; and by the united power of the civil and military sword, reduced the capital into some degree of order and decorum. The effect of his exertions was, that the pope exchanged the vices of the rake and the debauchee, for those of the ambitious politician, and the hypocrite. Otho was a person of upright intentions and shining endowments; yet so ignorant were mankind, that the whole Western world, with Otho at their head, agreed to reverence the see of Rome as supreme. The popes were rebuked, condemned and punished;

but the popedom was revered as much as ever. God had put it into the hearts of princes to accomplish his will, and to agree to give their power unto the beast, until the words of his prophecy should be fulfilled.

Notwithstanding Otho's subjection to the see of Rome, he made vigorous efforts to purify the church, promote learning, erect bishoprics, and propagate the gospel among barbarians.

In the mean time, the Normans, in the West, were committing the most dreadful outrages; and the Turks in the East were let loose on mankind, as a just scourge for their iniquities. Such was the dismal night of popery.

CHAPTER II.

PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL.

DURING this century, the gospel was planted in Hungary, and that nation was almost wholly evangelized.

Adalbert, archbishop of Prague, was uncommonly devoted to the service of God. He saw his predecessor dying in the most terrible agonies of conscience, on account of his avarice, and neglect of ministerial duties. Adalbert was appointed his successor, but with so little satisfaction to himself, that he was never known to smile afterward. Being asked the reason, he said, "It is an easy thing to wear a mitre and a cross, but an awful thing to give an account of a bishopric, before the judge of quick and dead." Bohemia, the scene of his labors, was covered with idolatry. He endeavored, in vain, to effect a reformation, and sighing over the wretched objects of his charge, he left them, travelled as a missionary, and planted

the gospel in Dantzic. His labors seem to have been crowned with good success, and he is commonly styled the Apostle of Prussia. He visited other places, and was finally murdered by a barbarian in the year 937.

The work of God in Denmark met with a severe check in this century. King Gormo labored to extirpate the gospel there entirely. At length, Henry I. called the *Fowler*, the predecessor of the great Otho, led an army into Denmark, obliged Gormo to promise submission, and prohibited his persecuting the Christians. Under the protection of Henry, Unni, archbishop of Hamburg, and a number of other faithful missionaries, went into Denmark. Providence smiled on their benevolent exertions, and numbers were induced to embrace the truth as it is in Jesus.

Unni, animated with success, determined to visit the kingdom of Sweden. Arriving in that country, he found, that the gospel had there become extinct. However, it pleased God to give great success to his ministry; and having preached the gospel in the most northern part of that region, he finished his glorious course in the year 936.

On the death of Unni, prince Eric procured other missionaries, whose labors were at first attended with a blessing. But the nobles of Sweden, enraged to find their licentiousness restrained, commenced a persecution against both the missionaries and the king. The former were beaten with rods and expelled from Upsal; the latter was murdered on account of his piety.

The son and successor of Eric trod in the steps of his father, and suppressed the persecuting spirit; he propagated Christianity among his subjects, and lived to see the good effects of his zeal and piety.

Harold, the successor of Gormo, king of Denmark, took every wise and salutary method to propagate divine truth among his subjects, and restrain vice and immorality. His son, Suen-Otho, formed a junction

with the chiefs of the country, murdered his father, and persecuted the Christians, with the greatest cruelty. Like another Manasseh, in his afflictions he knew that the Lord was God. Being expelled from his throne, and forced to live in exile, he was induced to remember the lessons of his childhood ; and repent of his sins. Being restored to his throne, he labored to destroy the idolatry, which he had supported.

During this century, the light of the gospel penetrated into Norway, Iceland, and Greenland ; and the triumphs of Christianity was complete throughout all Scandinavia.

Poland had hitherto remained in the thickest night of ignorance ; and both an inland situation and barbarous neighborhood seemed to exclude it from the light of the gospel. At length a number of Poles, while transacting business among Christians, were penetrated with what they heard respecting Christianity, listened to the word of God, and received it gladly. Having embraced the gospel themselves, they every where recommended it to their countrymen ; the happy infection spread from heart to heart ; missionaries were sent to help forward the work ; the glad news of salvation reached the ears of the king ; and Poland soon became a Christian nation.

The Greek missionaries continued to labor in Russia, and gradually succeeded. The empress Anna, by her zealous importunity, prevailed on her husband to embrace Christianity. He was baptized in the year 987 ; and at that time Russia formed a Christian establishment, and has since considered herself a daughter of the Greek church.

Thus in an age of proverbial darkness, that illustrious prophecy continued to receive its accomplishment : "Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers."

The work of propagating the gospel is laudable in the degree, and must appear so to all, who

desire that the name of Jesus may be honored through the earth, and that the power of his grace may be established in the hearts of perishing sinners.

CHAPTER III.

WRITERS OF THIS CENTURY.

IN a dearth so excessive, there are few who deserve particular notice either for knowledge or piety.

That the true doctrines of the gospel and some knowledge of their experimental power were not altogether lost in the church, the following quotations will evince ; though, of the authors themselves no particular account can be given.

Theophylact very strikingly expresses his thoughts on the gospel in opposition to the law. “ The law, if it detect any man sinning, even in a circumstance that may appear trifling, condemns him to death ; but the Holy Spirit receiving those, who have committed innumerable offences, in the laver of regeneration, justifies them, and quickens those who are dead in sin. The righteousness of God preserves us, not our own righteousness ; for what righteousness can we have, who are altogether corrupt ? ”

Another author observes, “ In us all, who are by nature children of wrath, and born under the yoke of diabolical slavery, it is not expected that any will choose to come out of the mass, but those whom celestial mercy will deliver. “ For it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.”

Such was the light, scattered here and there in the midst of darkness. By this the God of mercy called, nourished, and sanctified his church, and prevented the prince of darkness from completely overspreading the earth.

CENTURY XI.

CHAP. I.

GENERAL STATE OF THE CHURCH IN THIS CENTURY.

THE genuine church of Christ, under the protection and influence of her supreme Head, existed indeed in this century ; but it would be in vain to attempt a regular and systematic history of her proceedings. Some particular circumstances in different parts of the Christian world, some pious and successful endeavors to propagate the gospel in pagan countries, some degrees of opposition to the reigning idolatry and superstition, and the writings of some pious and evangelical theologians, demonstrate, that the Spirit of God had not forsaken the earth.

The Eastern church, enfeebled and oppressed by the Turks and Saracens without, and by civil bribes and factions within, continued sunk in ignorance, and ingulfed in the horrible pit and miry clay of sin. In the West some attention was paid to the improvement of learning ; particularly by the French and English ; and even the ferocious Normans began to cultivate their minds.

But it is almost in vain, that we look for the emanations of piety. In Italy and France, however, there were some, who felt the power of divine grace, and opposed the abominations of the popedom.

In the East, the great source of political contention was the crusades : in the West, the disputes between the popes and emperors. The former were attended dreadful evils, and much augmented the influence

ANSELM.

He was born in Piedmont. From early life, he was uncommonly serious, and made rapid progress in religious knowledge. On the death of Lanfranc, Anselm succeeded him in the see of Canterbury.

That he was a strenuous supporter of the Papal dominion, cannot be denied; yet as a divine and a Christian, he was one of the first characters in this century.

Anselm appeared much better in private, than in public life. Indeed he so disliked his high station, that he entreated the pope to give him leave to resign his archbishopric and assume a character merely clerical.

Finding the church overborne by the iniquities of a tyrant, he retired to the Continent and employed his active mind in writing a treatise on the doctrine of the Trinity and Incarnation. This work was, at that time, very useful to the church; for after a sleep of ages the genius of Arianism or Socinianism, or both, awoke, took advantage of the general ignorance; and corrupted the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

Anselm died in the sixteenth year of his archbishopric, and the seventy-sixth of his age. Toward the end of his life, he wrote on the Will, Predestination, and Grace, much in Augustine's manner. In prayers, meditations, and hymns, he seems to have had a peculiar delight.

The works of this great prelate are partly scholastic, and partly doctrinal; taken together, they demonstrate him to have been eminently endowed with genius and piety. Like Augustine, he abounds, both in profound argumentation, and in devout and fervent meditation on practical godliness.

He thus expresses his admiration, while he meditates on the power of the cross. "O bidden fortitude! that a man, nailed to the cross, should overcome the world, and punish its wicked powers with everlasting destruction. O secret power! that a man condemned

with robbers, should save men condemned with devils ; that a man, extended on a cross, should draw all things to himself ! O secret virtue ! that one, expiring in agony should draw innumerable souls from hell ; that a man should undertake the death of the body, and destroy the death of souls !”

This holy personage appears, from his comments on the fifth, sixth, and seventh of Romans, to have understood the right use of the law and the gospel ; the power and pollution of indwelling sin ; its augmentation in the heart from the irritation of the law, which forbids evil ; and the real, and solid relief from guilt by the grace of Jesus Christ.

Remove the rubbish of superstition, and view the inward man ; and you see in Anselm all that is vital and essential in godliness. Nor is he content with orthodoxy of sentiment. Let us hear how he pants after God, and learn from him to apply by prayer for the power of the doctrine, which we profess. “ Draw me, Lord, into thy love. As thy creature, I am thine altogether ; make me to be so in love. I ask, I seek, I knock. Thou who causest me to ask, cause me to receive ; thou givest me to seek, give me to find ; thou teachest me to knock, open to my knocking. From thee I have the desire ; O may I have the fruition.” Let this suffice, as a specimen of those groanings which cannot be uttered, of which the breast of Anselm was conscious, and which, in every age of the church, have been known by the real people of God. These spiritual emotions are delightful in the ears of the heavenly host, and inferior only in harmony to the praises of just men made perfect.”

Speaking of the son of God he says, ‘ That the only begotten Son should undertake to intercede for me with the eternal Father, demonstrates him to be man ; and that he should succeed in his intercession, shews that the human nature is taken into union with the ~~testy~~ of the Deity.’

He addresses the Son as God, as “the Redeemer of captives, the Saviour of the lost, the Hope of exiles, the Strength of the distressed, the Enlarger of the enslaved spirit, the sweet Solace and refreshment of the mourning soul, the Crown of conquerors, the only Reward and joy of the citizens of heaven, the copious Source of all grace.”

Those alone who have searched deeply into the human heart, have been truly serious for eternity; have been well practised in self-examination, and, are become well acquainted with their own demerits, are disposed to relish the precious truths of the gospel, advanced by this eminent divine.

From the example of Anselm, we may infer the inestimable benefit of reading the Scriptures, meditation and prayer. This was his delightful employment; and the blessed effects of it are exhibited in the actions of his life, and spirit of his writings.

CENTURY XII.

CHAP. I.

THE LIFE OF BERNARD.

A GREAT luminary strikes our attention at the commencement of this century—the famous Bernard, abbot of Clairval.

Bernard was a very ardent champion of the papedom, though not of the personal characters of the popes. He inveighed against the prevailing enormities, and particularly against the various evils of ecclesiastical administration. In superstition also, he was unhappily involved all his days.

There was a time, when Bernard was idolized. His word was law through Europe, while he lived; and for many years after his death, he was scarcely thought to have been capable of a fault or mistake.

Bernard, was born in Fontaine, a village in Burgundy, in the year 1091. From infancy he was devoted to religion and study, and made rapid proficiency in knowledge. He early resolved to retire from the world, and engaged all his brothers, and many of his friends in the same monastic views with himself. The most rigid rules were agreeable to his inclination. Hence, he became a Cistercian. This sect was at that time, few in number. Their fondness for excessive austerity prevented their increase. Bernard, however, by his superior genius, his eminent piety, and ardent zeal, gave to this order, a lustre & celebrity which their institution, by no means de-

manded. He continued to rise in eminence among them, and was finally appointed abbot of Clairval.

Bernard practiced and encouraged the most extreme austerities. Yet amidst them all, his soul was inwardly taught of God; and as he grew in the divine life, he gradually learned to correct the harshness and austerity of his sentiments. Having reduced himself to the greatest weakness, by his absurd excesses, he was humbled under a sense of his folly, and confessed it in the strongest terms. He finally recovered his strength, and by preaching and traveling from place to place, began to exert himself for the good of mankind.

He decidedly refused the highest ecclesiastical dignities; yet no Potentate, whether civil or ecclesiastical, possessed such real power as he did. He reigned among men of all ranks, and his word became a law to princes and nobles.

That which eminently marked the character of Bernard, amidst all the honors heaped upon him, was his undissembled humility. Though he was the highest in the judgment of men, he was the lowest in his own estimation. He said, and he felt what he said, namely, "That he had neither the will nor the power to perform the services, for which he was so much extolled, but was wholly indebted to the influence of divine grace."

The talents of Bernard, as a preacher, were doubtless of the first order. He possessed that variety of gifts, which enabled him to address either the great or the vulgar. At the command of the pope, and at the request of other bishops, he was accustomed to preach in various places; and the impressions left on the congregations, who crowded from all parts to hear him, demonstrated the power of his eloquence.

BERNARD'S DEFENCE OF EVANGELICAL TRUTH
AGAINST ABELARD.

The merits of the controversy, between these two great men, can scarcely be appreciated, without a previous view of the life and transactions of the latter. Peter Abelard was born in Britany in the year 1079, and was a man of genius, industry and learning.

Confident and presumptuous by nature, elated with applause, and far too haughty to submit to the simple truth revealed in Scripture, he was, from the moment that he applied himself to the sacred writings, ardently disposed to embrace heretical sentiments. Having appeared, in a very splendid light, in the schools of philosophy, and been equally distinguished for his acuteness and contentious spirit, he began to exhibit himself in public, and was admired by his ignorant auditories.

Elated with his success, he added to his erroneous doctrines a profligate life, and thus went on, till finally his projects of ambition were disappointed; and he, with his unhappy Eloisa, retired into monastic obscurity.

Ambition and the force of an active genius induced him to engage a second time in theological disputations. He assumed the character of a teacher, and opposed every fundamental doctrine of Christianity. The doctrine of the Trinity he either renounced or confounded with philosophical speculations. The atonement of Christ, he in effect, denied; the efficacious influences of the Spirit he asserted, in many cases to be unnecessary; and the fallen state of man by nature, he excluded from his creed. Had Abelard renounced the Christian name, at the same time that he renounced the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, he would have merited the character of an honest man. But such candor seldom belongs to the character of heretics. Strict truth, and plain deal-

ing in religious matters, are scarcely to be expected from any, but those who are humbled before God, and sanctified by his truth.

The rulers of the church took cognizance of this growing heresy, called a council at Soissons, and summoned Abelard to appear. He was accused of various heresies, ordered to commit his publications to the flames, and recite the symbols of Athanasius. He obeyed both the mandates, and after a short confinement was set at liberty.

But notwithstanding all this he persevered in propagating his heretical sentiments ; and, at length, it became impossible for his errors to escape the observation of the abbot of Clairval.

About the year 1139, William, abbot of St. Thier-ry, alarmed at the growing progress of Abelard's doctrine, wrote to Gregory, bishop of Chartres, and to Bernard, entreating them to undertake the defence of divine truth. "God knows I am confounded," says he, "when I, who am no man, am compelled to address, on a subject of urgent importance, you and others whose duty it was to speak, though hitherto you have been silent. For when I see the faith of our common hope so grievously and dangerously corrupted, without resistance and without contradiction ; the faith which Christ hath consecrated for us with his blood ; for which Apostles and martyrs contended, even to death ; which holy teachers defended with much labor and fatigue, and which they transmitted entire and uncorrupt to these dregs of time ; I feel a distress, which constrains me to speak for that faith, for which I would wish to die, if it were necessary. They are no small objects, which I lay before you. The faith of the holy Trinity, the Person of the Mediator, the Holy Spirit, the grace of God, the sacrament of our common redemption, are the subjects which engage our attention. For Peter Abelard again teaches and writes novelties ; his books cro-

the seas, and pass over the Alps ; and his new sentiments, concerning the faith, are carried into provinces and kingdoms, and preached to crowded audiences ; and are openly defended ; they are even said to have made their way into the court of Rome. I say to you both, your silence is dangerous, both to yourselves and to the church of God ; I tell you, this monster is as yet in labor ; but if he be not prevented, he will eject a poisonous serpent, for which no charmer can be found."

" If I can convince you, that I am justly moved, I trust you will also be moved ; and in an important cause like this, will not fear to part with him, though he be a foot, an hand, or even an eye. I myself have loved him, and wish to do so still (God is my witness,) but in this cause, I know neither relation nor friend."

Thus excited, the heroic spirit of Bernard was roused to attend to the subject ; he made himself master of it, and impressed with its immense magnitude, resolved to exert himself on the occasion. He first held a private conference with Abelard, and admonished him in a friendly manner. This first attempt being fruitless, he according to the rules of Scripture, took with him two or three persons, and in their presence expostulated with the innovator. Finding his endeavors ineffectual, he began to warn the disciples of Abelard against the errors of their master ; and to guard, so far as he could, the Christian world against the growing heresy.

In the archiepiscopal city of Sens, a superstitious ceremony was to be performed in the year 1140, and a vast concourse of people expected to attend. Abelard, incensed at the open and repeated opposition of Bernard, challenged him to make good his charges of heresy on that occasion.

Bernard seems to have been considerably embarrassed at this step. His good sense enabled him to see the difference between popular preaching, and

close scholastical argumentation ; to the former he had been habituated ; with the latter he was unacquainted. He knew also that Abelard excelled all men in controversy, and that age and experience gave him a great advantage over a young antagonist. Bernard, therefore, at first, refused to appear.

Elated at the apparent pusillanimity of Bernard, Abelard collected his friends, spake in a strong tone of victory, and appealed to many concerning the justice of his cause. But recollecting that vast multitudes were going to the spectacle to behold the combatants, that Christians would stumble at his apparent cowardice, the adversary would triumph, and error would grow stronger, Bernard with much reluctance, yielded to the advice of friends, and determined to meet Abelard, at the time and place appointed.

The assembly was splendid. Lewis VII. was there with his nobles ; the archbishop, with the bishops of his diocese, many abbots, professors, and in general all the learned of France were present.

The superstitious ceremony being performed on the first day, on the second, the two abbots appeared, and every eye was fixed on them. The whole assembly was suspended in expectation of the contest. Bernard arose, and in a modest and diffident manner declared, "I accuse not this man, let his own works speak against him. Here they are, and there are the propositions extracted from them. Let him say, I wrote them not, or let him condemn them, if they be erroneous, or let him defend them against my objections." He then delivered the charges to the promoter, who began distinctly to read them. He had not read far, when Abelard arose, "I appeal," said he, "to the pope," and refusing to hear any more, began to leave the assembly, which was astonished at the unexpected stop. "Do you fear," said Bernard, "for your person ? you are perfectly secure ;

you know that nothing is intended against you ; you may answer freely, assured of a patient hearing." "I have appealed to the court of Rome," cried the appalled heretic, and withdrew.

The bishops of France wrote to the pope, an account of these proceedings, in which they affirm that Bernard "certainly appeared at Sens, inflamed with pious fervor, nay unquestionably, with the fire of the Holy Spirit." They also observed that Abelard's sentiments were read over in public, and that the arguments of Bernard, convinced the synod that the sentiments, which he opposed, were not only false but heretical.

The influence of Bernard's labors, in this cause, on the minds of the Christian world, was very great, and decisively defeated the designs of the enemy. One of the writers of Bernard's life observes ; "Blessed be God, who gave to us a better master, by whom he confuted the ignorance of the former, and quashed his arrogance ; by whom Christ exhibited to us three special objects in his sufferings ; an example of virtue, an incentive of love, and a sacrifice of redemption."

Roused by the exhortations of Bernard, the pope pronounced a definitive sentence against Abelard, ordered his works to be burnt, and the heretic to be confined in a monastery ; in which place he ended his days.

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE CATHARI, AND OF BERNARD'S CONDUCT TOWARDS THEM.

BERNARD was held in such high estimation, that no character nor sect arose, but he was looked up to, as a judge, to decide concerning their merit. He had not always the means of such accurate information, in the case of Abelard ; hence there is reason to believe, that he treats as heretics, some, "who were excellent of the earth." The Cathari, in parti-

cular, were a people, whom he unjustly condemns. The term Cathari, corresponds with the more modern appellation of Puritans, and was most probably affixed to them in derision and contempt.

This people were very numerous throughout a great part of Europe ; but Colonge, Flanders, the South of France, and the North of Italy, were their principal places of residence. They were a poor and illiterate, yet plain, unassuming, harmless, and industrious race of people. By their doctrine and manners, they condemned the whole apparatus of the reigning superstition ; placed true religion in the faith and love of Christ ; and retained a supreme regard for the word of God.

They continued in a state of extreme persecution through this century. It seems that God formed them to shew forth his praise, and to provoke the rest of mankind by the light of true humility and holiness.

Bernard attacks them with great boldness, brings very formidable accusations against them ; yet his testimony, in favor of their general conduct, seems to overbalance all his invectives. He says, "If you ask them of their faith, nothing can be more Christian ; if you observe their conversation, nothing can be more blameless ; and what they speak, they prove by deeds." He owns that these men died with courage in defence of their doctrines, and blames those who had, in an illegal and irregular manner, destroyed some of them ; still he brings heavy charges against them, and condemns them for crimes, which they had never committed.

The lover of real Christianity should not be stumbled at these things. The power of prejudice is great, and it is hard to say how many wrong notions, both Bernard and these supposed heretics might maintain ; and yet both serve the same God in the gospel of his Son. That he did so is abundantly evident ; that many of them did so, their lives and suf-

ferings evince. It will be one of the felicities of heaven that saints will no longer misunderstand each other.

An extract from the writings of one of this sect will farther illustrate their principles. "The first principle of those," says he, "who desire to serve God is to honor God the Father, to implore the grace of his glorious Son, and the Holy Ghost, who enlightens us in the true way. This is the Trinity, full of all power, wisdom, and goodness." "To the love of God," he observes, "the love of our neighbor should be joined, which comprehends the love even of our enemies." He speaks of the believer's hope of being received into glory; he explains the origin of all that evil, which reigns in the world; and traces it up to the sin of Adam, which brought forth death, whence, says he, Christ hath redeemed us by his own death.

EXTRACTS FROM BERNARD'S WRITINGS.

THE zeal of Bernard appears very fervent in a small tract concerning conversion, in which he insists largely, and distinctly on the necessity of divine illumination, in order to genuine conversion. He exhorts his audience to self-examination; and while he presses them to investigate their own breasts, he points out the salutary effects of a just conviction of sin. Speaking of the joys which Christians experience he says:—"Expect not from us a description of their nature. The Spirit alone reveals them; they are to be known only by experience. Not erudition, but unction, teaches here; not knowledge, but inward consciousness, comprehends them."

In a sermon on the Song of Solomon, Bernard lays open something of his own experience on the operations of the Holy Spirit, and illustrates our Saviour's comparison of them to the wind, "Thou knowest not whence cometh, and whither it goeth." After a preamble,

full of cautious modesty, and the most unaffected reverence ; he says, “ I was sensible, that he was present with me ; I remembered it after his visits were over; sometimes I had a presentiment of his entrance, but I never could feel his entrances or his exit. Whence he came and whither he departed, by what way he entered or left me, I confess, that I am even now ignorant ; and no wonder, for his footsteps are not known. You ask, then, since all his ways are unsearchable, whence could I know that he was present ? His presence is living, and powerful ; it awakened my slumbering soul ; it moved, softened, and wounded my heart, which had been hard, stony, and distempered. It watered the dry places, illuminated the dark, opened those which were shut, inflamed the cold, made the crooked straight, and the rough ways plain ; so that my soul blessed the Lord, and all that was within me praised his holy name.”

His writings abundantly evince his experience in the various operations of the Holy Spirit ; and his sermons show that he made a practical use of these things.

The divine life was, it seems, understood in the twelfth century ; that same life which is felt in all ages by holy men, which has its foundation in the genuine doctrines of grace, which alone produces true virtue upon earth, which is the comfort of real Christians, and the ridicule of mere philosophers, and which will issue in heavenly glory.

DEATH AND CHARACTER OF BERNARD.

No one of the ancient fathers seems to have had so little justice done to his memory, as Bernard. He lived in an age so ignorant and superstitious, that Protestants are ready to ask, “ Can any good thing come out of the twelfth century ? It is difficult to say whether he has been more injured by the extravagant encomiums of some, or by the illiberal censures of others.

If we strip him of his ascetic vest, and consider the interior endowments, he will appear to have been no mean or ordinary character. His learning was but moderate ; his understanding was solid, and his judgment seldom erred in subjects or cases, where the prejudices of the age did not warp the imagination. His genius was truly sublime, his temper sanguine, his mind active and vigorous. The love of God appears to have taken deep root in his soul, and to have been always steady, though always ardent. His charity was equal to his zeal ; and his tenderness and compassion to Christian brethren, went hand in hand with his severity against the heretical, the profane, and the vicious. In humility he was truly admirable ; he scarcely seems to have felt a glimpse of pleasure on account of the extravagant praises every where bestowed upon him. His heart-felt dependance on Christ, and his heavenly affections, were incontestably strong. He united much true Christian knowledge with much superstition. There is not an essential doctrine of the gospel which he did not embrace with zeal, defend with argument, and adorn by practice. Socinianism, in particular, was by his means nipped in the bud, and prevented from thriving in the Christian world.

Such was Bernard, who is generally called the best of the fathers.

He died at the age of about sixty-three, and at length, as we have reason to believe, through faith and patience inherited the promises.

CHAPTER II.

GENERAL STATE OF THE CHURCH IN THIS CENTURY.

Of the Greek church, hardly any thing occurs, which properly falls within the design of this history. Superstition, idolatry, frivolous contentions, and metaphysical niceties, attended with a lamentable want of true y, form almost the whole phenomena of the East.

In this chaos of the church, only a few facts will be mentioned, which may throw some light on its general state.

Just at the close of the eleventh century, Pope Urban II. held a Synod of 150 bishops, in order to promote the Crusades, and exhorted the Christian world to concur in promoting that object. In the year 1099 Jerusalem was taken by the Crusaders, and the fanatical war continued to agitate both Europe and Asia. Among the thousand evils which this war produced, was the sale of indulgences. This iniquitous traffic the pope diffused through Europe, for the purpose of encouraging what was called the Holy War. He dared to usurp the authority which belonged only to God, by pretending to abolish the punishment, which awaited the wicked in the world to come. The whole discipline of the church was, by this means dissolved; and those who had the means to purchase a license to sin, were emboldened to let loose the reigns of vice and folly.

The revival of learning, at this time, gave a new tone and vigor to the human mind; although it could not communicate grace, nor even enable men to see the folly of enslaving themselves to the popedom. The influence of the bishops of Rome grew prodigious; the emperors of Germany trembled under the rod; and even some of the bravest and most judicious kings of England, were found unequal to contend with the hierarchy. Innocent III. in an edict, which he published, declared, that he would not endure the least contempt of himself nor God, whose place he held on earth; and that he was determined to act like a sovereign.

The learning, as well as the impiety of the Continent, passed into England. That island was rapidly advancing into a deplorable subjection to the Roman see. Princes of solid understanding, lamented, struggled, and resisted; but to little effect. They felt the temporal oppression of ecclesiastical tyranny, while they were perfectly regardless of their own spiritual misery; and even assisted the court of Rome in

secuting real Christians. One instance of the barbarity of Henry II. deserves to be distinctly recorded.

Thirty men and women, who were Germans, appeared in England in the year 1159, and were afterwards brought before a council at Oxford. Gerard, their teacher, said that they were Christians, and believed the doctrines of the Apostles. They expressed an abhorrence of the doctrine of purgatory, of prayers for the dead, and of the invocation of saints. Henry, in conjunction with the council, ordered them to be branded with a hot iron on the forehead, to be whipped through Oxford, to have their clothes cut short, to be turned into the open fields ; and he likewise forbade any person, under severe penalty, to shelter or relieve them. They remained, however, patient, serene, and composed, repeating, "Blessed are those, who are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Being the depth of winter, they all lost their lives through cold and hunger.

What a darkness must at that time have filled this Island. A wise, and sagacious king, a renowned University, the whole body of the clergy and laity, all united in expelling Christ from their coast.

It may be asked, "Where was the true church to be found in this disastrous period?" In a general appearance of national religion she was not to be discovered; yet, God had his secret ones, who lived in humble security ; and amidst the convulsions of a surrounding world, enjoyed the light of Emmanuel's countenance.

When contemplating the darkness of this period, a true believer may find consolation by reflecting, that all this was foretold ; and that the most disastrous, as well as the most glorious, events, are predicted in Scripture.

The gospel was in this century farther extended among the idolatrous nations ; though the methods of propagating divine truth, were too often unchristian, yet some missionaries in this period seem to have been actuated by an apostolical spirit, and manifested a willingness to spend and be spent for the good of souls.

CENTURY XIII.

CHAP. I.

THE WALDENSES.

THE reader will recollect the account which has been given of the Cathari, a people of God who lived in the former part of the last century. In the latter part of the same century they received a great accession of numbers from the learned labors, and godly zeal of Peter Waldo. In this century they were gloriously distinguished by a dreadful series of persecution; and exhibited a spectacle, both of the power of divine grace, and of the malice and enmity of the world against the real gospel of Jesus Christ. The history of this people will be represented in one connected view, till the time of the Reformation, and a little after. The spirit, doctrine, and progress; of the Waldenses will be more clearly understood by this method, than by broken and interrupted details.

The Cathari were particularly numerous in the valleys of Piedmont. Hence they were called Vallen-ses. A mistake arose from a similarity of names, that Peter Waldo or Valdo was the founder of these churches. It was therefore denied, that they had any existence till the appearance of Peter Waldo. But from a just account of the subject, it appears that their popular founder was Claudio of Turin, the Christian hero of the ninth century.

About the year 1160 the doctrine of transubstantiation was required, by the court of Rome, to be acknowledged by all men. A very pernicious practice

of idolatry was connected with the reception of this doctrine. People fell down before the consecrated host, and worshipped it as God. The novelty, absurdity and impiety, of this abomination, very much struck the mind of Peter Waldo, a citizen of Lyons. Influenced by the fear of God, and an alarming sense of the wickedness of the times, he courageously opposed this, and other dangerous corruptions of the hierarchy.

A providential circumstance had given the first occasion to this Reformer's concern for his soul. Being assembled with some of his friends, one of the company fell down dead upon the ground, to the amazement of all who were present. From that moment it pleased God, that Waldo should commence a serious inquirer after divine truth. This person was an opulent merchant of Lyons ; and as his concern of mind increased, and a door of usefulness to the souls of men was more and more set open before him, he abandoned his mercantile occupation, distributed his wealth to the poor, and exhorted his neighbors to seek the bread of life. The poor, who flocked to him, received from him the best of instructions ; and reverenced the man to whom they were so much indebted ; while the great and the rich hated and despised him.

Waldo, however, that he might teach others effectually, needed himself to be taught. Darkened and distressed in mind and conscience, he knew that the Scriptures were given as the only infallible guide ; and he thirsted for that source of instruction, which was then, for the greater part, a sealed book in the Christian world. He applied himself to the sacred study, found means to translate the Bible, and diffused the precious gift among the people.

As Waldo grew more acquainted with the Scriptures, he discovered, that the general practice of nominal Christians was abhorrent to the doctrines of the New Testament. Inflamed with equal zeal and cha-

rity, he boldly condemned the reigning vices of the pope, taught his neighbors the principles of practical godliness, and encouraged them to seek salvation by Jesus Christ.

Pope Alexander III. having heard of these proceedings, anathematized the Reformer and his adherents, and commanded the archbishop of Lyons to proceed against him with the utmost rigor. Waldo made his escape; his disciples followed him; a dispersion took place; and his doctrines were more widely spread through Europe.

Persecuted from place to place, Waldo retired into Picardy. Success still attended his labors, and the doctrines, which he preached, so harmonized with those of the Waldenses, that they and his people were henceforward considered as one.

To support and encourage the church of Christ formed no part of the glory of the greatest princes of that age. Philip Augustus, one of the most prudent and sagacious princes that France ever saw, took up arms against the Waldenses of Picardy, pulled down three hundred houses belonging to gentlemen who supported them, and drove the inhabitants into Flanders. Not content with these acts of barbarity, he pursued them thither, and caused many of them to be burnt.

Waldo fled into Germany, and settled at last in Bohemia. There he ended his days about the year 1179. He was indeed a very extraordinary person, resembling in many respects, the immediate successors of the Apostles. But his acquirements, piety, and labors, met with no reward upon earth. He appears to have been one of those, of whom the world was not worthy; who turned many to righteousness, and who shall shine as stars for ever and ever.

The word of God grew and multiplied in those regions, where Waldo had planted it. In some places, it was followed with a powerful effusion of the Holy

Spirit. Persecutions ensued; many were put to death, and died in confident assurance of a blessed immortality.

Almost throughout Europe, Waldenses were treated as the offscouring of the earth, and as a people against whom all the power and wisdom of the world were united. But "the witnesses continued to prophesy in sackcloth," and souls were built up in the faith, hope, and charity of the gospel.

We are justly called on, in this place, to vindicate the claim, which this people made to the honorable character of the church of God. In times of very great declension, whoever is led by the Spirit of God to revive true religion, necessarily exposes himself to the invidious charges of arrogance, uncharitableness, and self conceit. By condemning all others, he provokes the rest of the world to observe, and investigate his faults. These disadvantages the Waldenses had in common with other reformers, they had also disadvantages peculiar to themselves. Power, knowledge, and learning, were almost entirely in the hands of their adversaries; in them very particularly, God chose the weak and foolish things of the world to confound the wise. As they were, for the most part, a plain and illiterate people, they furnished no learned divines, no profound reasoners, nor able historians. The vindication of their claims, therefore, to the character of a true church, must be drawn principally from the holiness of their lives, and the patience of their sufferings.

Nothing can exceed the calumnies of their adversaries. In this respect, they had the honor to bear the cross of the first Christians. Almost every name of reproach, which the malice of men could invent, was heaped upon them. It would be endless to recite them. But however numerous, they were sufficiently confuted by the authentic writings, holy lives, and patient sufferings of this people.

We may form some just idea of the piety and probity of the Waldenses, from the following testimony of their enemies.

A Pontifical persecutor says, "In morals and life they are good, true in words, unanimous in brotherly love."

Rainerius, the cruel persecutor, owns that the Waldenses were accustomed to read the Scriptures, and in their preaching cited the words of Christ, and his Apostles; that they taught men to live agreeably to the rules of the Bible; that they lived religious lives; that their manners were seasoned with grace, their words prudent, and that they frequently discoursed upon divine things.

He likewise informs us, that they faithfully instructed their children.

The bishop of Turin wrote a treatise against their doctrines, in which he candidly owns that they were blameless, without reproach among men, and that they observed the divine commands with all their might.

Another says, that he had seen some among them, who could recite the book of Job; and several others, who could repeat the whole New Testament.

The bishop of Cavaillon, to convince them of their errors, sent them a preaching monk. He returned in confusion, and owned, that in his whole life he had never known so much of the Scripture, as he had learned those few days, in which he had held conference with the heretics.

One of the Doctors, who had been sent among them from the theological school of Paris, openly confessed, that he had understood more of the doctrines of salvation, from the answers of little children in their catechisms, than by all the disquisitions he had ever heard.

The same author informs us, that Lewis XII. importuned by the calumnies of informers, sent two respectable persons into Provence to make inquiries. They reported, that in visiting all their parishes and

temples, they found no images nor Roman ceremonies ; that they could not discover any marks of the crimes, with which they were charged ; that the Sabbath was strictly observed ; that children were baptized according to the rules of the primitive church, and instructed in the articles of the primitive faith, and the commandments of God. Lewis, having heard the report, declared with an oath, "They are better men than myself or my people."

Thousands of these godly people, against whom malice could say no evil, but what admits the most satisfactory refutation, were seen patiently to suffer persecution for the sake of Christ. They were distinguished for every virtue, and only hated for godliness itself. Persecutors, with a sigh, owned, that because of their virtues, they were the most dangerous enemies of the church.

How obdurate is the heart of man by nature. Men could see and own the superior excellence of these persons, and yet could barbarously persecute them. What a blessed light is that of Scripture ? By that the Waldenses saw the road to heaven, of which the wisest of their contemporaries were ignorant ! How marvellous are the ways of God ! How faithful his promise in supporting, and maintaining a church, even in the darkest times ! But her livery is often sack-cloth, and her external bread that of affliction.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE WALDENSES.

The Waldenses were faithful to the great fundamental principles of Protestantism. Enough appears on record to evince the correctness of their sentiments.

To transcribe their confession of faith would be tedious. Let it suffice to mention the most important points.

The confession of the Bohemian Waldenses is very explicit. They say that men ought to acknowledge

themselves born in sin, and to be burdened with the weight of sin ; that they ought to acknowledge, that for this depravity, and for the sins springing up from this root of bitterness, utter perdition deservedly hangs over our heads ; that all should own, that they can in no way justify themselves, nor have any thing to trust to but Christ alone.

They assert that all who are saved, have been elected of God, before the foundation of the world. They give a practical view of the doctrine of the Trinity, perfectly agreeable to the faith of the orthodox in all ages. Let it suffice to mention what they say of the Holy Ghost :—“ We believe that he is our Comforter, proceeding from the Father, and from the Son ; by whose inspiration we pray, being renewed by him, who performeth all good works in us ; and by him we have knowledge of all truth.”

Their catechism, for the instruction of youth, contains, in substance, the same vital truths, which form the catechism of Protestant churches.

There is among this people a very ancient confession of sin, which was commonly used ; and which shows that they taught every person to apply to himself that hideous picture of human depravity, which St. Paul delineates, and which every Christian feels and laments.

PERSECUTIONS OF THE WALDENSES.

The external history of the Waldenses is little else but a series of persecution. It is to be regretted, that while we have a large account of the cruelties of their persecutors, we have very scanty accounts of the spirit with which they suffered.

Both princes and people were now enslaved to the popedom, and were easily led to persecute the children of God, with the most savage barbarity. We are astonished, when reading the details of this persecution. It was an assemblage of every thing cruel, perfidious, indecent, and detestable.

The Waldenses were considered the greatest enemies to the church of Rome, because they had a great appearance of godliness, lived righteously before men, and in all things believed rightly concerning God.

In the year 1206, Pope Innocent III., instituted the inquisition ; and the Waldenses were the first objects of his cruelty. He authorized certain monks to frame the process, and to deliver the supposed heretics to the secular power. In the beginning of the thirteenth century, thousands were hanged and burned by this wicked device. Their sole crime was, that they had trusted only in Jesus Christ for salvation, and renounced all the vain hopes of self-righteousness, idolatry, and superstition.

From the establishment of the court of inquisition, till the year 1228, the havoc made among helpless Christians was such, that the work of imprisonment was deferred, because the number apprehended was so great that it was impossible to defray the charges of their subsistence ; or even to provide stone and mortar to build prisons for them. Yet so true is it that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church, that in the year 1530 there were in Europe 800,000 who professed the religion of the Waldenses.

Previously, however, to these horrid cruelties, the pope used gentle means with the Waldenses, and endeavored, by persuasion, to bring them over. A monk, whom he had sent among them, was murdered, most probably by Raymond, count of Toulouse. The conduct of this one man so exasperated the pope, that he resolved on the utter destruction of the Waldenses, despatched preachers throughout Europe, and collected all, who were willing to revenge the innocent blood of Peter. "We promise," said he in his bull, "to all who shall take up arms to revenge the said murder, the pardon and remission of their sins. We exhort you, that you would endeavor to destroy the wicked heresy of the Albigenses, and do this with more vigor, than you

would use towards the Saracens themselves. Persecute them with a strong hand ; deprive them of their lands and possessions ; banish them, and put Roman Catholics in their room.

Three hundred thousand pilgrims, induced by the united motives of avarice and superstition, filled the country of the Albigenses with carnage and confusion for several years. Thus were exhibited the most horrid scenes of baseness, perfidy, barbarity, indecency, and hypocrisy.

The castle of Menerbe on the frontiers of Spain, for want of water, was reduced to surrender to the Pope's legate. A certain abbot undertook to preach to those who were found in the castle, and to exhort them to acknowledge the pope. But they interrupted his discourse, declaring that his labors were to no purpose. Earl Simon and the legate then caused a great fire to be kindled, and burned an hundred and forty persons of both sexes. These martyrs died in triumph, praising God that he had counted them worthy to suffer for the sake of Christ.

In the year 1229 a council was held at Toulouse ; one of the canons of which was, that the laity should have neither the Old nor New Testament in the vulgar tongue, and that men should not translate the Scriptures.

About the year 1400, the persecutors attacked the Waldenses in the valley of Pragela. The poor people, seeing their cave possessed by their enemies, who assaulted them during the severity of winter, retreated to one of the highest mountains of the Alps ; the mothers carrying cradles and leading by the hand those little children who were able to walk. Many of them were murdered, others starved to death ; a hundred and eighty children were found dead in their cradles, and the greatest part of their mothers died soon after them.

In the valley of Lyons 400 little children were found suffocated in their cradles, or in the arms of their de-

ceased mothers, in consequence of a great quantity of wood being placed at the entrance of the cave, and set on fire. More than 3,000 persons, belonging to the valley, were destroyed; and this righteous people were in that place exterminated.

But it would be uninteresting to pursue a history of the persecutions, which continued more or less violent till the end of the sixteenth century. We therefore turn from a scene, in which there is nothing but a repetition of enormities, and which equally shows the influence of the prince of darkness, and the enmity of the carnal mind against God.

CHAPTER II.

GENERAL STATE OF THE CHURCH IN THIS CENTURY.

FROM the foregoing account, the reader is prepared to conclude, that, abstracted from the Waldenses, there was, at this time, scarcely a church of Christ to be found in Europe. But as the Waldenses confessed, there were some "individual souls in Babylon" who loved the Lord, and served him under all the disadvantages of popish tyranny, and superstition.

The gloom of ignorance was very great; nor was it abated, but in some respects rather increased, by the growing celebrity of the Aristotelian philosophy. For by it the understandings of men were furnished with polemical weapons, but by no means enlightened with useful truths. Endless questions were started, and as every student was much more engaged in confounding his adversary, than in explaining any one object of science, every serious inquirer after truth must have been embarrassed beyond measure. The controver-

sial combatants, while they raised the dust of contention, suffocated each other ; and gave no real light, either to themselves or to the world in general.

Some few there were, of superior genius and penetration, who saw through the sophistry of the fashionable learning, and cultivated a more reasonable mode of intellectual improvement.

Roger Bacon, the Franciscan friar, stands distinguished among these. His knowledge of astronomy, optics, and mathematics, as well as of Greek and Oriental learning, was wonderfully great for the age in which he lived. But he, and a very few others, shone in vain, except to themselves, in the firmament of knowledge. All feared, scarcely any aided, and very few understood them.

Bacon speaks very contemptuously of the learning of his contemporaries, particularly of the Dominicans and Franciscans, who were almost the only orders that devoted themselves to study. These men had ample buildings, and princely houses ; they attended the death-beds of the great and rich, and urged them to bequeath immense legacies to their own orders. They gained much ground in this century ; and indeed, till the institution of the Jesuits, they were the pillars of the Papacy. Persecution of heretics, so called, formed a great part of their employment. The Dominicans, in particular, were the founders of the inquisition.

In the year 1234, Pope Gregory IX. wishing to revive the Crusades, and feeling the connexion between this cause and the credit of the popedom, invited men to assume the cross, and proceed to the Holy Land. He pretended, in the name of God, to absolve Crusaders from real guilt, and to assure to them the kingdom of heaven.

Previously to this event, the growing enormity of self-righteousness had been encouraged throughout the Christian world. The evil was now multiplied ex-

ceedingly. The additional doctrine of commutation for penances removed the mind still farther from Christ, fixed its dependence more strongly on the papedom, and opened the floodgates of vice and immorality. A religion prevailed, which accommodated itself to all sorts of sinners; those of a more decent cast were taught to expect divine favor by their own works; and the more scandalous transgressors, by the doctrine of commutation for offences, might still obtain forgiveness.

The scripture was all this time neglected; the knowledge of the Hebrew tongue was, in a great measure, lost; and even the learning, which was reviving, became a powerful instrument of augmenting the general obscurity.

Of the Eastern church, scarcely any thing worthy of relation occurs; yet it may be proper to mention, that in the year 1299, Othman in the East, was proclaimed Sultan, and founded a new Empire, called the Othman Empire. The mixed multitude, of which this Empire was composed, were the remains of four Sultanies, which had for some time subsisted in the neighborhood of the river Euphrates. Under the name of Turks, they succeeded the Saracens in propagating Mahometanism, in diffusing the horrors of war, and in scourging the people of Europe for their idolatry and avariciousness.

CENTURY XIV.

CHAP. I.

GENERAL STATE OF THE CHURCH IN THIS CENTURY.

THE same ignorance and superstition, the same vices and immoralities, which predominated in the last century, discoloured the appearance of the church in this. Real Christians were still to be found, either among the Waldenses, or in obscurity, worshipping God under the unspeakable disadvantages of the general corruptions. There arose, indeed, in this century, various sectaries, who were cruelly persecuted, and whom, at first sight, we are ready to conclude must have been real Christians. We cannot, however, find positive evidence that any of them professed the doctrines of the gospel, or were influenced by the real spirit of Jesus. Some of them were the disgrace of human nature, both in their principles and their practice.

These persecuted sects were called Lollards, a name of reproach generally given to all professors of piety. The church of God, therefore, considered as a society, seems only to have existed among the people, whose history has been related above.

Nor far from this time, a schism took place in the church, which was providentially a blessing to mankind. While for the space of fifty years, the church had two or three heads at the same time ; and while each of the contending popes was anathematizing his competitors, the reverence of mankind for the papedom itself insensibly diminished ; and the labors of

those, whom God raised up to propagate divine truth, began to be more seriously regarded through the Christian world.

In a council held at Lambeth, in the year 1281, it was expressly declared that the whole body, and blood of Christ was given, at once, under the species of bread; and thus the innovation, of denying to the laity communion in both kinds, was gradually introduced. This was one of the latest, and at the same time one of the most absurd corruptions of popery, destitute of every ground of argument, either from Scripture, or common sense.

There was some opposition made to the errors of popery in this century, both as to doctrine and practice. In general, however, the great defect of those who withstood the corruptions was this; while they distinctly complained of the fashionable abominations, they are very scanty in describing those evangelical doctrines, which alone can relieve and sanctify the souls of men.

CHAPTER II.

DISTINGUISHED CHARACTERS OF THIS CENTURY.

THOMAS BRADWARDINE.

THIS learned and pious person is supposed to have been born about the year 1289. He was of Merton College, Oxford, and one of the proctors of that University in 1325. He excelled in mathematical knowledge, and was in general distinguished for his accurate and solid investigations in divinity. There was a depth in his researches, which entitled him to the name of "the Profound." On an occasion of a va-

caney in the see of Canterbury, the monks of that city chose him archbishop,

Bradwardine was consecrated in 1349, but lived to fill that high station only a few weeks.

His great work was “concerning the cause of God against Pelagius ;” an admirable performance, whether we consider the force of his genius, the solidity of his reasoning powers, or the energy of his devotion.

Bradwardine had observed how very few, in his days, appeared to be conscious of their need of the holy Spirit to renew and sanctify their natures ; and being himself deeply sensible of the desperate wickedness of the human heart, and of the preciousness of the grace of Christ, he seems to have overlooked the fashionable superstitions, and to have applied the whole vigor and vehemence of his spirit to the defense of gospel truths.

Observing that a disputatious and sceptical spirit resulted from the pride of the heart, he prays earnestly for a heaven-taught simplicity of mind ; and while he takes notice, that God despises the proud, he thankfully owns that he visits, illuminates, and rejoices the simple.

He maintains the doctrine of a universal, decisive providence, and makes an excellent practical use of it. He says, “He, who excludes from his creed, the doctrine of divine providence, removes, so far as in him lies, the greatest encouragements to patience, hope, consolation, and joy. Who will serenely bear adversity, if he believe it to proceed from chance, or ultimately from an enemy ; and if he do not know, that it really proceeds from, and is guided by, the unerring directions of the all-wise God, who, by this means, purges sins, exercises virtues, and accumulates rewards ?”

Such were the views and feelings of a studious and thoughtful scholar of the fourteenth century. Unaided by human connexions, and in an age dreary and

unpromising, he lived the life of faith in the Son of God.

JOHN WICKLIFF.

This renowned Reformer was first heard of at Merton College in Oxford, one of the most famous seminaries of learning of that age. Even Walden, his enemy, owns that he was astonished at the strength of the argumentation, and the copiousness of the authorities, which he adduced to support his opinions.

He began to flourish about the year 1371. He preached on the Sabbath against the vices of the friars, and the prevailing abuses in religion; particularly, against the real presence in the eucharist. His labors, on the other days of the week, corresponded to those on the Lord's day. The schools were then in high repute. Aristotelian logic was at its height; and Wickliff made use of the same weapons to oppose error, which his adversaries employed to maintain it.

He openly protested that his principal design was to recover the church from idolatry; especially, in regard to the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ. Hence he raised against himself a storm of persecution, was removed from his office, and treated with cruel injustice. During this season of trial, there appeared in Wickliff inconsistencies, that are by no means compatible with the character of a great reformer. These inconsistencies, however, may be palliated, and in part excused.

He was finally delivered from persecution, and continued, to the end of his days, in the unremitting exercise of zealous pastoral labors. He persevered in attacking the abuses of popery, produced a translation of the Bible from the Latin into the English tongue; and insisted on the right of the common people to read the Scriptures. The work of translating the ~~Scriptures~~, is alone sufficient to render his name im-

mortal. The value of it is unspeakable, and the effects salutary and lasting.

Wickliff died in peace in the year 1387. After his death his enemies did their utmost to express their malice against him. In the year 1410 his works were burnt at Oxford; and in 1428 his remains were dug out of his grave and burnt, and his ashes thrown into the river of Lutterworth. The number of his volumes, committed to the flames by the archbishop of Prague, amounted to about two hundred. His labors, indeed, appear to have been immense; and he was, in that dark age, a prodigy of knowledge.

The distinguishing tenet of Wickliff in religion was, undoubtedly, the election of grace. He calls the church an assembly of predestinated persons. The efficacy of Christ's atonement was also a subject very precious to his soul. He exhorted men to trust wholly to Christ for salvation, and not to seek to be justified in any other way than by him. He said, "Unbelievers, though they may perform works apparently good in their matter, still were not to be accounted righteous men; that all, who followed Christ, became righteous through the participation of his righteousness, and would be saved." He adds the following sentence, "Human nature is wholly at enmity with God. All men are originally sinners. We cannot think a good thought, unless Jesus send it. We cannot perform a good work, unless it be properly his good work. His mercy prevents us, so that we receive grace; and it follows us, so as to help us, and keep us in grace. Heal us, good Lord, we have no merit! Give us grace to know that all thy gifts be of thy goodness only."

CENTURY XV.

CHAP. I.

THE LOLLARDS.

TERMS of reproach have in all ages been applied to real Christians. Lollard, the name given more particularly to the followers of Wickliff, is one of them.

Courtney, archbishop of Canterbury, employed himself with great vehemence and asperity against the Lollards. King Richard II. was also induced to patronize this persecution, though it does not appear that during his reign any of the Lollards were actually put to death. The blind fury of these ambitious men was restrained, partly by the power of the duke of Lancaster, and partly by the influence of Ann, the consort of Richard II.

The whole body of the Lollards were, in general, so perfectly void of offence in practice, that speculative errors formed the only charge, that could be brought against them; and even in regard to these errors, there seems reason to apprehend, that the followers of Wickliff very much meliorated the sentiments of their master, and leader. Only for the gospel's sake they suffered, whatever might be the pretences of their enemies.

Richard II. being deposed, Henry of Lancaster usurped the throne in the year 1399, and was crowned by Arundel, archbishop of Canterbury. Henry IV and Arundel commenced a persecution more terrible than any which had ever been known under the

English kings. William Sawtre was the first, who was burnt in England, for opposing the abominations of popery. Gloriying in the cross of Christ, and strengthened by divine grace, he suffered the flames of martyrdom in the year of our Lord 1400.

The conflict now grew serious. Henry published a severe statute, by which grievous pains were to be inflicted on all, who should dare to defend, or encourage the tenets of Wickliff. This, in conjunction with a constitution of Arundel, seemed to threaten the extinction of what was called heresy. The persecutors were extremely active; and many, through fear of punishment, recanted; but worthies were still found, who continued faithful unto death.

In the year 1413 Henry V. succeeded to the throne, trode in the steps of his predecessor, and countenanced the cruel and ambitious plans of Arundel. In the first year of the new king's reign, this archbishop collected at London a universal Synod of all the bishops and clergy of England. The principal object of the assembly was to repress the growing sect; and as Lord Cobham had, on all occasions, discovered a partiality for the reformers, the resentment of the archbishop, and of the whole body of the clergy, was particularly levelled against him. No other man in England was, at that time, so obnoxious to the ecclesiastics. He made no secret of his opinions; distinguished himself for opposing the abuses of popery; and for collecting, transcribing and dispersing the works of Wickliff; and maintained a great number of itinerant preachers in various parts of the country. Lord Cobham was a favorite both of the king and of the people, and therefore, to effect his destruction, was an undertaking that required much caution. The archbishop, was, however, in earnest; and by cruelty, injustice, falsehood, and deceit, finally effected his ruin. He was, at length, arrested by the king's express orders, and lodged in the tower of London. On the day appoint-

ed for his examination, he was brought before the court, and endured an ignominious trial, with great fortitude; boldly defended the truth, and in the issue, was condemned as an heretic, and sent back to the tower. Having remained there some weeks, he at length, by unknown means, made his escape, took the advantage of a dark night, evaded pursuit, and arrived safe in Wales, at which place he remained concealed more than four years.

The trial of lord Cobham, though in many points of view a gloomy tale, affords a remarkable and very satisfactory evidence of the faith of the gospel exemplified in practice. This exemplary man appears to have possessed the humility of a Christian, as well as the spirit and courage of a soldier. He protested against the idolatry of the times, and also made such penitential declarations, and affecting acknowledgements of having broken God's commandments, as imply salutary self-knowledge, self-abasement, strong convictions of sin, and a firm reliance on the mercy of God through the mediation of Jesus Christ. The dignity of his manner, the vehemence of his expressions, and the quickness and pertinence of his answers, were so strikingly obvious, as to fill the court with astonishment.

The clergy were not a little mortified to find that this grand heretic and destined victim had escaped out of their hands. However, a very remarkable transaction at length afforded them every advantage they could wish, to gratify their resentment against this noble chief of the Lollards. These peaceable, and truly Christian subjects had been accustomed to assemble in companies for the purpose of devotion; but the bishops represented their meetings as of a seditious tendency, and obtained a royal proclamation for suppressing these conventicles.

The royal proclamation, however, did not put an end to the assemblies of the Lollards. Like the pri-

mitive Christians, they met in smaller companies, more privately, and often in the dead of night. St. Giles's field, then a thicket, was a place of frequent resort on these occasions. And here a number of them assembled on the eve of January 6th, 1414. The king received intelligence, that Lord Cobham, at the head of 20,000 of his party, was stationed in St. Giles's field for the purpose of seizing the person of the king, putting their persecutors to the sword, and making himself regent of the realm.

The king suddenly armed the few soldiers he could muster, put himself at their head, marched to the place where the Lollards were assembled, killed twenty, and took sixty prisoners.

The king now became thoroughly exasperated against the Lollards, and particularly against Lord Cobham. A bill of attainder, against that unfortunate nobleman, passed the commons; the king set a price of a thousand marks upon his head, and promised a perpetual exemption from taxes to any town that should secure him.

In the latter end of 1417, this persecuted Christian was apprehended, and brought to London. His fate was soon determined. He was dragged into St. Giles's field with all the insult and barbarity of enraged superstition; and there, both as a traitor and a heretic, he was suspended alive in chains, and burnt to death.

This excellent man, by a slight degree of dissimulation, might have softened his adversaries, and escaped a troublesome persecution, and a cruel death. But sincerity is essential to a true servant of Jesus Christ; and Lord Cobham died, as he had lived, in the faith and hope of the gospel, bearing to the end a noble testimony to the genuineness of its doctrines; and choosing, rather, to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

Henry Chicheley, at this time archbishop of Canterbury, was an instigator of the greatest wickedness ; and deserves to be called the firebrand of the age in which he lived. To subserve the purposes of his own pride and tyranny, he engaged king Henry in his famous contest with France ; by which means a prodigious carnage was made of the human race, and the most dreadful miseries were brought upon both kingdoms. While this scene was carrying on in France, the archbishop, at home, partly by exile, partly by forced abjurations, and partly by the flames, domineered over the Lollards, and almost effaced the vestiges of godliness from the kingdom.

In the year 1422, Henry V. died in the midst of these tragedies. But the persecution was continued during the minority of Henry VI. ; and it may be sufficient to remark, that all who were convicted of what was then called heresy, were first condemned as heretics, then delivered to the secular arm, and lastly burnt to ashes without mercy and without exception.

Such were the sanguinary methods, by which the prelates of England attempted to extirpate the Lollards. And they so far succeeded, that the few disciples of Wickliff, who still remained alive, seem to have been finally confounded with the favorers of the Great Reformation. The burning of heretics, however, was not the way to extinguish heresy. On the contrary, both in England, and on the continent, such detestable cruelties increased the compassion of the people for the sufferers, excited their indignation against the persecutors, and roused a spirit of opposition to the existing hierarchy, which at length proved fatal both to papal corruption of sound doctrine, and to papal usurpation of dominion.

When we are wearied and astonished with the contemplation of the barbarous and bloody scenes of this century, one of the most profitable, and most certain conclusions, we can arrive at, is, that the human heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.

CHAPTER II.

THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE INCLUDING THE CASES OF JOHN HUSS AND JEROME OF PRAGUE.

THIS celebrated council made no essential reformation in religion ; on the contrary they persecuted men who truly feared God ; and they tolerated all the predominant corruptions. Their labors, therefore, do not deserve to be recorded, on account of the piety and virtue of those who composed the council. Yet the transactions at Constance, claim considerable attention in these memoirs. They tend to throw a light on the state of religion, at that time ; to illustrate the character of John Huss, and of Jerome ; and afford instructive reflections to those, who love to attend to the dispensations of divine Providence.

The council met in the year 1414 ; but was not dissolved till 1418. Its objects were various, and of high importance. The necessity of the times had called aloud for an assembly of this kind. Ecclesiastical corruptions had increased to an intolerable magnitude ; and Christendom had been distracted nearly forty years by a schism in the popedom. To settle this dispute, and restore peace to the church were the most urgent concerns of this council. Three pretenders to the chair of St. Peter, severally laid claim to infallibility. The very nature of their struggle was subversive of the authority to which each of them made pretensions ; and of their vain contests, there seemed no end. However, they deposed the three existing popes, and choose a fresh successor of St. Peter.

The venerable name of Reformers cannot be given to that assembly. That there needed to be a reformation in the church, and that church discipline ought to be attended to, they readily granted. But they

brought not to the council materials, which could alone qualify them for such a work. In general, the best individuals among them were merely moralists ; they had some "zeal for God, but not according to knowledge ;" and knew no higher principles than the voice of natural conscience, and the dictates of common sense. The original depravity of man, salvation through the atonement of a Redeemer, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit, were doctrines, the use and efficacy of which, they did not understand. Several little punctilios were reformed, but all the substantial evils, still remained in the church.

The countries represented by deputies at this council were Italy, France, Germany, Bohemia, Hungary, Poland, England, Denmark, and Sweden. All the dignified characters there assembled, had not sufficient spirit and integrity to punish crimes of the most atrocious nature ; yet they could burn without mercy, those whom they deemed heretical, though men of real godliness.

After this short review, it may be proper to be a little more particular in regard to the proceedings of this council.

At the opening of the council, Pope John XXIII., and the emperor Sigismund were at the head of it ; and continually endeavored to baffle the designs of each other. The former was, by far, the most powerful of the three popes, who, at that time, struggled for the chair of St. Peter—but his character was infamous in the extreme. Sigismund was remarkable for hypocrisy and dissimulation. Political artifices, however, were multiplied by both these potentates, and by many others connected with the council.

John Huss was summoned to the council to answer for himself, although previously excommunicated at Rome. He obtained, however, a safe conduct from the emperor, who committed him to the care of several Bohemian Lords.

John Huss was born in Bohemia in 1373, was of mean parentage, but was raised to eminence by his superior genius and industry. He was appointed rector of the University of Prague, and nominated preacher of Bethlehem in the year 1400.

The doctrinal knowledge of the Bohemian Reformer was always very defective ; but the little fundamental light which, through grace he obtained, was directed to the best practical purposes. He preached boldly against the Romish church ; and in a Synod at Prague he, with amazing freedom, protested against the vices of the clergy.

A man, who had rendered himself so obnoxious to the hierarchy, could not escape the aspersions of calumny. Accordingly, we find that in the year 1408, a clamor was raised against him ; his troubles became serious ; and he was soon excommunicated at Rome.

Being summoned, as we have seen, at Constance, he obeyed ; and though his mind strongly foreboded that which happened in the issue, his resolution to appear at the general council was constant, and unmoved.

Soon after his arrival at Constance, he was deprived of his liberty, and summoned to appear before John XXIII. "I had expected," said Huss, "to give an account of myself before the general council, and not before the Pope and his cardinals : however, I am willing to lay down my life rather than betray the truth." He sat out without delay, and on his arrival at the pope's palace was committed to prison. The pope appointed commissioners to try him ; and the vexatious insults, to which he was exposed, were endless. With great clearness, he vindicated himself against the charge of heresy ; but his holy life was unpardonable in the eyes of his enemies. The crooked arts of intrigue were too powerful for the sincerity and open dealings of Huss ; and he soon found, that to commit his cause to him that judgeth righteously, was his only expedient.

In the year 1415 the commissioners, for examining Huss, found themselves impeded by the emperor's grant of safe conduct ; and scrupled not to entreat that prince to violate his most solemn engagements. The perfidious emperor finally complied with their request, and refused any longer to protect this monument of suffering innocence.

The Bohemian nobility, enraged at the perfidy of Sigismund, repeatedly remonstrated against his proceedings but all to no purpose. At the solicitation of Paletz, Huss was confined in a Dominican convent, where he became dangerously sick, through the bad air, and other inconveniences of a noisome dungeon.

While the members of this council agreed in persecuting the church of God, and detained in prison the excellent John Huss, they were involved in extreme difficulties, and scarcely knew how to support that system of idolatry, and secular formality of religion to which they were attached. They were even divided among themselves ; and the imperial, and papal party contended with the bitterest acrimony.

While these parties were thus at variance, the commissioners endeavored to oblige John Huss to retract, but in vain. Though infirm and harrassed with a variety of vexations he continued to maintain the character of a Christian hero.

It was a remarkable instance of the conduct of divine Providence, that John XXIII. himself the unrighteous persecutor of Huss, was brought as a prisoner to the castle of Gottleben, and lodged in the same place with the victim of his cruelty.

This unrighteous prelate was, at length, solemnly deposed, and rendered incapable of being re-elected. The same sentence was issued against the other two popes. The conduct of these three men, particularly the first, had been so infamous, that all the world applauded the determinations of the council respecting them. In general the members of this assembly were

influenced by superstitious, selfish, worldly motives ; but this decision is among the very few important instances, in which they merit commendation.

While the Bohemian Reformer, contrary to every principle of justice, honor, and humanity, was still detained in confinement ; there was exhibited, at this council, another striking example of persecution.

Jerome of Prague, the next object of their cruelty, now excites attention. He had neither a clerical, nor a monastic character. He was a man of superior talents, adhered to John Huss, and vigorously seconded all his endeavors to promote a reformation.

When Huss set out for Constance, Jerome exhorted him to maintain, with steadfastness, the doctrines, which he had preached ; and promised, that he would himself go to Constance, to support him, should he hear that he was oppressed. Huss, in one of his letters, expressly desired a friend to prevent Jerome's performance of this promise, lest he should meet with the same treatment which he himself had experienced. But Jerome had the generosity to disregard the entreaties of Huss, and came directly to Constance, to vindicate the cause of his friend. Finding it impossible to be of any service to Huss, he resolved to return to his own country. But on his way home, he was arrested at Hirsaw and led in chains to Constance.

He was immediately brought before a general council, which seems to have assembled for the express purpose of insulting, ensnaring, and browbeating their virtuous prisoner. No opportunity was allowed, either for explanation or defence ; all was confusion and uproar ; voices burst from every quarter. "Away, with him, away with him ;" "to the fire, to the fire," was the continual outcry.

Jerome stood astonished at the indecency of the scene ; and as soon as he could in any degree be heard, he looked round upon the assembly with a steady and most significant countenance, and cried aloud, "Since

nothing but my blood will satisfy you, I am resigned to the will of God."

After this tumultuous examination, Jerome was conveyed to St. Paul's church, bound to a post, and his hands chained to his neck. In this posture he remained ten days, and was fed with bread and water. His friends, all this time, knew not what was become of him, till at length, one of them received notice from the keeper of the prison, and procured him better nourishment. But notwithstanding this, the various hardships, to which he had been exposed, brought upon him a dangerous illness; and although he obtained some small mitigation of his sufferings, from bonds and other cruel treatment, he remained a prisoner till his death.

The council next proceeded to read the doctrines of Wickliff, and as far as appears, they were reprobated without a dissenting voice.

During the same year, 1415, another object of controversy was started in the council, which was afterward attended with important consequences, and produced one of the usual subjects of contention between Papists and Protestants. This was the doctrine of the communion in both kinds. Pious men were raised up, who learned, that withholding the cup from the laity was not only erroneous, but contrary to the express command of Christ. The principal author, or to speak more properly, the principal reviver of this practical truth in the church of Christ, was Jocebad, who seems to have been a zealous, active, and laborious minister of Christ.

The appearance of the new controversy, added to the question concerning Jerome of Prague, increased the fury of the storm against Huss; and his enemies labored day and night for his destruction. His health and strength were decayed by the rigor of confinement. The great men of Bohemia, insisted that justice should be done to their countrymen; but justice

was a stranger at Constance. The emperor had perfidiously given up this faithful servant of God to the malice of his enemies ; and the council, as if conscious of the difficulty of condemning him openly, had recourse to the despicable means of attempting, by repeated insults and vexations, to shake his constancy, and render a public trial unnecessary.

The approbation of a good conscience, and the comforting presence of the spirit of God, appear to have supported this holy man in all his sufferings. He gave his adversaries no advantage over him, either through warmth or timidity ; refused to give answers in private, and reserved himself to a public trial ; retracted nothing of what he had openly preached, and possessed his soul in patience, and resignation.

The unrighteous views of the council being thus far baffled, he was conducted to Constance, lodged in a monastery, and loaded with chains. Having undergone a tedious and malignant trial at Constance, he was remanded to prison ; and from the obstinate rage of his enemies, justly concluded that his end was near.

This holy personage redeemed the little time which was allowed him, by writing letters, which were publicly read at Bethlehem, the once delightful scene of his ministry.

At length he received another solemn deputation, in which were two cardinals and some prelates, who tried their utmost to induce him to recant. Huss, however, persisted in his integrity, and announced his resolution in terms of great vehemence and solemnity.

Huss was once more brought before the council, and there in the presence of the emperor, the princes of the empire, and a vast concourse of people, continued to maintain his integrity, and committed his cause to him that judgeth righteously.

Sentence was finally pronounced against him, and he was ordered to be degraded. After various insults, they stripped him of all his vestments, uttered a curse

on stripping him of each. Having completed his degradation by the addition of some other ridiculous insults, they put a paper coronet on his head, on which they had painted three devils, with this inscription "Arch-heretic;" and said, "We devote thy soul to the infernal devils." "I am glad," said the martyr, "to wear a crown of ignominy, for the love of him who wore a crown of thorns."

Sigismund committed the execution of Huss to the elector of Palatine. The martyr, walking amidst his guards, declared his innocence to the people. When he came near the place of execution, he kneeled down and prayed with great fervency; and then affirmed, that he was glad to seal, what he had written and taught, with his blood. His neck was fastened to the stake, the wood piled about him, the fire kindled, and he was soon suffocated, having called on God as long as he could speak.

A Roman Catholic historian, speaking of John Huss and Jerome of Prague says, "They went to the stake as to a banquet; not a word fell from them, which discovered the least timidity; they sung hymns in the flames to the last gasp without ceasing."

Thus by a death, which has affixed eternal infamy on the council of Constance, slept in Jesus the celebrated John Huss. Human depravity has not often produced a scene so completely iniquitous, and so much calculated to bring disgrace on the Roman church.

The abilities, and acquirements of John Huss, seem to have been above mediocrity; his natural temper was mild, and condescending; and the events of his life prove him to have possessed exquisite tenderness of conscience, fervent piety, and almost unexampled fortitude.

There was something peculiar in the case of John Huss. He may justly be said to have been a martyr to holy practice. He seems not to have held any one doctrine which, at that time, was called heretical.—

The world hated him, because he was not of the world, and because he testified of it that its deeds were evil.

The council, with Sigismund at their head, preserved the most solemn forms of religion, although their conduct continued to appear detestable ; void of meekness, justice, and humanity. In the mean time, Jerome was repeatedly examined, and continued to sustain the rigor of his confinement with patience and constancy.

Toward the latter end of the year 1415 a letter was sent to the council from the noblemen of Bohemia, in which they, in a very decided and feeling manner, reproved the council for putting to death John Huss, and for retaining in prison Jerome of Prague.

The council, startled at the expostulations of the Bohemian noblemen, yet being still determined to maintain their own unjust authority, at length, partly by promises and partly by threatenings, induced Jerome of Prague to retract his sentiments. Jerome's retraction was, at first, equivocal; afterward explicit and circumstantial. He anathematized the articles both of Wickliff and of Huss; declared that he believed every thing that the council believed; and even added, that if in future, any doctrine should escape him contrary to his recantation, he would submit to everlasting punishment! Thus was disgraced before all the world, and humbled in his own eyes, a man of most excellent morals, of superior endowments, and of great learning and fortitude.

Jerome, notwithstanding his retractions, was remanded to prison; where he found, however, that he was allowed a little more liberty than before.

There were persons, who, not being satisfied with his retractions, insisted on his being tried a second time; and the council actually proceeded to examine him again.

Then it was, that this great man, whom a long series of affliction, and cruel persecution, and above all the consciousness of his late prevarication had brought

into the lowest distress, began to exhibit that strength of mind, that force of genius, that power of eloquence, and that integrity and fortitude, which will be the admiration of all ages. After he had acted against his conscience, he retired from the council with a heavy heart. His chains had been taken from him, but his load was transferred from his body to his mind ; and the caresses, of those about him, served only to mock his sorrow. The anguish produced by his own reflections, rendered his prison a more gloomy solitude, than he had ever before found it. Jerome however, was not an apostate ; and the God whom he served, had compassion on the infirmities of his nature, and did not desert him in his humiliation. No, he made his latter end to be blessed and glorious.

At the examination, this Christian hero being denied the liberty of defence, exclaimed, " How unjust is it, that ye will not hear me ! Ye have confined me three hundred and forty days in several prisons, where I have been cramped with irons, almost poisoned with dirt and stench, and pinched with the want of all necessaries. During this time, you always gave to my enemies a hearing ; but refused to hear me so much as a single hour. I wonder not, that since ye have indulged them with so long and so favorable an audience, they should have had the address to persuade you, that I am an heretic, an enemy to the faith, a persecutor, and a villain. Thus prejudiced, ye have judged me unheard ; and ye still refuse to hear me. Remember, however, that ye are but men ; and as such, ye are fallible, and may suffer others to impose upon you. It is said, that all learning and all wisdom are collected in this council. The more then, does it behove you to take heed, that ye act not rashly, lest ye should be found to act unjustly. I know, that it is the design of this council to pass sentence of death on me. But when all is done, I am an object of small importance, who must see death sooner or later. Therefore what

I say is more for your sakes, than my own." The council were so far moved by his reasonings, that they resolved, after he had answered to the articles, to grant him liberty of speech. All the articles were read to him one after another, and his answers were delivered with an acuteness and dexterity, which astonished the court. When he was upbraided with the grossest calumnies, he stood up, with extended hands, and in a sorrowful tone cried out, "Which way, fathers, shall I turn? whom shall I call upon for help; or to bear witness to my innocence? Shall I make my address to you? But my persecutors have entirely alienated your minds from me by saying, that I am myself a persecutor of my judges. If ye give them credit, I have nothing to hope for."

Jerome having gained liberty of speech, though with much difficulty and opposition, determined to avail himself of the opportunity. He began with invoking the grace of God so to govern his heart and lips, that he might advance nothing, but what should conduce to the salvation of his soul. He gave so probable an account of the reasons of the malice of his enemies, that for some moments, he seemed to have convinced his judges. He extolled John Huss, vindicated the innocence of that holy martyr, and declared, that he was ready to suffer after his example. He then offered the reasons of his coming to Constance, and confessed his cowardice. "I confess," said he, "and tremble, while I think of it, that through fear of punishment by fire, I basely consented, against my conscience, to the condemnation of the doctrines of Wickliff and Huss." He then declared, that he disowned his recantation, as the greatest crime of which he had ever been guilty; and that he was determined to his last breath to adhere to the principles of those two men, which were as sound and pure, as their lives were holy and blameless. Having concluded his speech, he was carried back to prison, and there

visited by several persons, who hoped to reclaim him ; but in vain.

On the following month, he was again brought before the council, and there again affirmed, that he had done nothing in his whole life, of which he so bitterly repented, as his recantation ; that he revoked it from his very soul ; that he had been guilty of the meanest falsehood by making that recantation ; and that he esteemed John Huss an holy man.

The firmness, eloquence, and zeal of Jerome, sensibly affected the council. They proposed to him once more to retract. But he replied : "Ye have determined to condemn me unjustly ; but after my death, I shall leave a sting in your consciences, and a worm that shall never die. I appeal to the Sovereign Judge of all the earth, in whose presence you must appear to answer me." After sentence had been pronounced against him, he was delivered to the secular power, and treated with scorn and insult, similar to that which his friend Huss had experienced. He put the mitre, with his own hands, on his head, saying that he was glad to wear it for the sake of him who was crowned with one of thorns. As he went to execution, he sung with a loud voice, and a cheerful countenance. He kneeled down at the stake, and prayed. Being then bound, he raised his voice, and sung a paschal hymn.

Hail ! happy day, and ever be adored,
When hell was conquered by great heaven's Lord.

The wood was then set on fire ; and the martyr continued alive in the flames a quarter of an hour. There is the most unanimous testimony given, by all writers, to the heroic courage and fortitude, with which he sustained the torment.

Paggius, a celebrated Florentine, who was present at these scenes, has left the most unequivocal testimony to the abilities, fortitude and eloquence of Jerome.

"I confess," says he, "I never knew the art of speaking carried so near the model of ancient eloquence. It was amazing to hear with what force of expression, fluency of language, and excellent reasoning, he answered his adversaries; nor was I less struck with the gracefulness of his manner, the dignity of his action, and the firmness and constancy of his whole behaviour. Nothing escaped him. His whole appearance was truly great and pious."

Among other valuable purposes, to which the council of Constance was rendered subservient, this was not of the least importance; that the iniquity of the ecclesiastical system, then prevalent in Europe, was demonstrated before all the world.

In the year 1417, a sermon was preached in full council, which describes the abuses of the church in the strongest terms. The preacher, having mentioned the various enormities to which the clergy were addicted, cried, "Abomination appears within these walls; nor are we without instances both of the most scandalous passions, and the basest actions."

During the year 1417 the followers of Huss contrary to the genius of Christianity, began to exert themselves against the hierarchy; and proceeded to such lengths as to produce scenes perfectly tragical. But they could not succeed, because they attempted to cleanse the outside of the cup and platter, before they had cleansed that which was within.

Toward the close of the same year, the council proceeded to elect a new pope, and the choice fell upon Otho De Colonna, who assumed the name of Martin V. On the day succeeding the pope's coronation, all the nations, represented by the council, concurred in a resolution to demand of the new pope a reformation in the church. He made fair promises, but nothing that deserved the name of reformation was effected.

The new pontiff partook of the unrelenting cruelty of his predecessors, and commenced a sanguinary p-

secution against the Hussites. These were divided into two kinds, the Calixtines, who differed from the church of Rome only concerning the communion ; and the Taborites who are thought to have much resembled the Waldenses.

This celebrated council, which began to sit in the year 1414, having finished their iniquitous operations, was dissolved in the year 1418. A great effort was made by the united wisdom of Europe to effect a reformation ; but in vain. This reformation God, at length, produced ; but, in such a manner as to illustrate the divine declaration, namely, *Salvation is “not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.”*

CHAPTER III.

THE HUSSITES, TILL THE BEGINNING OF THE REFORMATION.

THE Bohemians heard of the murder of John Huss and Jerome of Prague, with the utmost indignation. To this cause historians ascribe the commencement of the Hussite war, which was carried on by the enraged Bohemians for thirteen years.

This war was distinguished with almost incredible victories over the emperor, and with unhuman cruelties on both sides. After an effusion of a deluge of blood, a treaty of peace was concluded in the year 1433. But the real Hussites were, as much as ever, exposed to the persecution of the church of Rome ; and were not only abandoned, but cruelly treated by their brethren. Those of them, who had been inclined to have recourse to the sword, were gradually convinced that patient faith and perseverance in prayer are the proper arms of a Christian soldier.

In the mean time the council of Basil succeeded that of Constance, and was conducted on a plan of similar intrigue and ambition. Among its other objects, the reduction of Bohemia to the papal system was not forgotten.

About the year 1453, a number of Hussites repaired to Lititz, and there held a conference, in which the plan of the Hussite church, or that of the united brethren, was formed ; idolatrous rites were prohibited, and a strictness of discipline, resembling that of the primitive church, was instituted. Among other resolves, they determined to make use of no carnal weapons, for the defence of their religion.

They were soon called to the exercise of that passive courage, which they professed. The increase of their congregations in Bohemia and Moravia, was beheld with suspicion. Even Gregory, the king of Bohemia, who had hitherto protected them, now consented to vent his malice against them, by the rigor of persecution.

The constancy with which they endured persecution, manifested, that they had not received the grace of God in vain. They were now declared unworthy of the common rights of subjects ; and in the depth of winter, were driven out of the cities and villages, with the forfeiture of all their effects. The sick were thrown into the open fields, where many perished with cold and hunger. Various sorts of torture were inflicted on the brethren ; numbers were barbarously murdered ; and many died in prison.

In the year 1480, they received a great increase of their numbers from the accession of the Waldensian refugees, who escaped out of Austria, where the vehemence of persecution no longer allowed this people to live in security. A union was easily formed between the Waldenses and the Hussites, on account of the similarity of their sentiments and manners. The refugees, however, found their situation but little meli-

orated, by a junction with a people, who were obliged to conceal themselves in thickets, and in clefts of the rocks ; and who, to escape detection by the smoke, made no fires except in the night. What they must have suffered in these circumstances, may be easily conceived.

In 1481, the Hussites were banished from Moravia ; but returned after six years ; and at the beginning of the sixteenth century, there were two hundred congregations of them in Bohemia and Moravia.

CHAPTER IV.

A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

THE most remarkable events, which distinguish this period of general history, appear to have been directed by divine Providence, with particular subser-
vency to the Reformation.

There cannot be a more melancholy contemplation, than to observe the infatuation of nations, who have provoked God to forsake them. Though the voice of God is addressed to their senses, they consider not the works of the Lord, and at the same time, seem to be as destitute of political sagacity, as they are of religious principles. The fifteenth century affords an awful instance of these things. The Turks oppressed Europe with persevering cruelty ; but Europe neither humbled herself before God, nor took any measures to check the ambition of the Mahometans. The Sovereign of the universe, however, was bringing order out of confusion, and light out of darkness. By a surprising concurrence of circumstances, the noble art of printing was invented about the year 1440.

ing was cultivated with incredible ardor ; the of the Medici was raised up to patronize sci-

ence ; and toward the end of the same century, Erasmus appeared, whose good sense, taste and industry, were uncommonly serviceable to the Reformation.

Thus under the care of Providence, materials were collected for that beautiful edifice, which began to be erected in the next century.

In the mean time there were some individuals, who, though not connected with any particular Christian societies, evinced the power of godliness. A number of these followers of Jesus, enlightened from above, and faithful to the service of God, were executed in Germany, not long after the burning of John Huss.

There were also some souls, who in secret, served God in the gospel of his Son ; and who knew what spirituality in religion meant ; though from some particular circumstances, they were never exposed to suffer for righteousness' sake.

Vincent Ferrer was one of this description. Though bred in the midst of darkness, and connected with the worst of ecclesiastical characters, he was a shining model of piety. Bishoprics and a cardinal's hat were offered him ; but his heart was insensible to the charms of worldly honor and dignity. He very earnestly wished to become an apostolic missionary ; and in this respect, he was, at length, gratified by Benedict. At the age of forty, he commenced his missionary tour. Having labored with success in Spain, France, and Italy ; he then, at the desire of Henry IV. king of England, exerted himself in the same manner throughout the chief towns of England, Scotland, and Ireland.

How very humble this man was, is manifest in part, from the little account, which has been given of him, but more particularly from his own confession. "My whole life is a sink of iniquity ; I am all infection. I am corrupted throughout. I feel this to be so, more and more."

CENTURY XVI.

CHAP. I.

THE REFORMATION UNDER THE CONDUCT OF LUTHER.

PRELIMINARIES.

THE sixteenth century opened with a prospect the most gloomy. Corruption, both in doctrine and in practice, had exceeded all bounds; and the general face of Europe, though the name of Christ was every where professed, presented nothing that was properly evangelical. Great efforts indeed had been made to emancipate the church from the "powers of darkness;" and in consequence, many individual souls had been conducted into the path of salvation. Still nothing like a general reformation had taken place in any part of Europe.

But not many years after the commencement of this century, the world beheld an attempt to restore the light of the gospel, more evangelically judicious, more simply founded on the word of God, and more ably and more successfully conducted, than any which had been seen since the days of Augustine. Martin Luther, whom Providence had raised up for this purpose, was the instrument, rather than the agent of "his Reformation. He was led on from step to step, a series of circumstances, far beyond his original notions; in a manner which evinces the excellency e power to be of God, and not of man.

The popish doctrine of indulgences was then in the highest reputation. The foundation of this doctrine is generally believed to be this: There was supposed to be an infinite treasure of merit in Christ and the saints, abundantly more than sufficient for themselves. This treasure, as they supposed, was deposited in the church, under the conduct of the see of Rome, and literally sold for money, to those who were able and willing to pay for it. Those, who did not purchase the remission of their sins by money, might obtain forgiveness by undergoing a course of severe penance.

“Pope Leo X. making use of that power, which his predecessors had usurped over all Christian churches, sent abroad, into all kingdoms, his letters and bulls, with ample promises of the full pardon of sins, and of eternal salvation to such as would purchase the same with money.” The system itself was wholly impious; and the right knowledge of justification was the only remedy adequate to the evil. This, therefore, was the capital object of the Reformation.

The person whom God raised up, at this time, to instruct an ignorant world, and to lead bewildered souls out of the labyrinth of superstition, was remarkably eminent for self-knowledge. Luther knew himself; and he knew also the Scriptural grounds on which he stood, in his controversies with ecclesiastical rulers. His zeal was disinterested, and his courage undaunted. Accordingly, when he had once erected the standard of truth, he continued to uphold it with an unconquerable intrepidity, which merits the gratitude and esteem of all succeeding ages.

CHAPTER II.

THE BEGINNING OF THE CONTROVERSY, CONCERNING INDULGENCES, TILL THE CONCLUSION OF THE CON- FERENCE BETWEEN LUTHER AND CAJETAN.

LEO X. succeeded to the popedom in the year 1513. He was famous for the encouragement of the fine arts ; and is deservedly celebrated among the patrons of learning. But historical veracity can scarcely admit any farther encomium on his character. Excessive magnificence, a voluptuous indolence, and above all, a total want of religious principle, rendered him, perhaps, more strikingly void of every sacerdotal qualification, than any of the preceding Pontiffs.

The ecclesiastical system was so corrupt, that common sense, and the voice of natural conscience agreed in the necessity of a reformation. In the year 1517 the spirit of Martin Luther was raised up to instruct the ignorant, to rouse the negligent, and to oppose the scandalous practices of ecclesiastical rulers. No reformer had ever an opportunity more favourable to his designs. Leo, having reduced himself to straits by his prodigal expenses, and wishing to complete the erection of St. Peter's church, had recourse to the sale of indulgences. This business was delegated to John Tetzel, a Dominican inquisitor. "This frontless monk," says a celebrated historian, "executed his commission, not only with matchless insolence, indecency, and fraud, but even carried his impiety so far, as to derogate from the all sufficient power and influence of the merits of Jesus Christ." People believed, that the moment in which any person paid the money for indulgences, he became certain of his salvation ; and that the souls, for whom indulgences were bought, were instantly released from purgatory.

Tetzel boasted that he had saved more souls from hell, by his indulgences, than St. Peter did by preaching.

While mankind were thus slumbering under an enormous load of superstition, an obscure pastor alone, and without help, began to erect the standard of sound religion. No man, who believes that "the preparation of the heart is from the Lord," will doubt, whether Martin Luther, in this great undertaking, was moved by the Spirit of God. This extraordinary person, at that time an Augustine monk, was professor or lecturer of the University of Wittemburg in Saxony. In the memorable year 1517, he began the work of reformation by intimating, from the pulpit, that persons might be better employed, than in running from place to place to procure indulgences. With deliberate steadiness, he ventured to persevere; and having tried in vain, to procure the concurrence of the dignitaries of the church, he published his theses, ninety-five in number. Their effects, on the minds of men, were rapid and powerful; and in fifteen days they were circulated throughout Germany.

But the real motive of Luther will be better discovered, by a brief view of the manners and spirit of the man, previous to his open declarations respecting indulgences. This Saxon Reformer was born in the year 1485, at Isleben, a town belonging to the county of Mansfeld. His father wrought in the mines of Mansfeld, which were, at that time, very famous; and, after the birth of his son Martin Luther, removed to that town, became a proprietor in the mines, discharged public offices there, and was esteemed, by all men, for his integrity. He gave a very liberal education to Martin, who was generally remarkable for dutiful affection to his parents; though in one instance, he was so led away by superstition, as to offend his father exceedingly. Having made great proficiency in his studies, he commenced master of

arts in the University of Erfurth at the age of twenty, gave close attention to the science of civil law, and is said to have intended himself for pleading at the bar. But a providential circumstance diverted him from his purpose. As he was walking in the fields with one of his most intimate friends, his companion was suddenly killed by lightning ; and Luther himself was so terrified, partly by this event, and partly by the horrid noise of the thunder, that while his mind was in the utmost consternation, he formed the hasty resolution of withdrawing from the world, and of throwing himself into the monastery at Erfurth. His father, a man of plain, but sound understanding, strongly remonstrated. The son as strongly pleaded, what he considered as a terrible call from heaven, to take upon himself the monastic vow ; and to the grief and mortification of his father, entered the monastery in the year 1505.

In the beginning of his monastic life, he was constantly sad and dejected. He had too much light to sit down in slothful content and indifference ; and too little to discern the rich treasures of the gospel, and apply its rich promises to one deeply convicted of sin and thirsting after righteousness. He remained more than a year, not only in constant anxiety and suspense, but in perpetual dread and alarm. In the second year, after Luther had entered into the monastery, he accidentally met with a Latin Bible. This he found a lasting treasure. By reading the word of God with prayer, his understanding was gradually enlightened, and beams of evangelical comfort darted across his wounded soul. With incredible ardor, he now devoted himself to the study of the Scripture, and the books of Augustine.

He was ordained in the year 1507 ; the next year he was called to the professorship at Wittemburg, in the year 1512 he was created doctor. At Wittemburg a theatre was opened for the display of his ta-

lents, both as a teacher of philosophy, and as a popular preacher. He excelled in both capacities. Eloquent by nature, and powerful in moving the affections, acquainted also, in a very uncommon manner, with the elegancies and energy of his native tongue, he became the wonder of his age.

We have now before us some interesting particulars of the private life of Luther, previously to the assumption of that public character, which has made his name immortal. The serious Christian will admire the wisdom and goodness of Providence, which by preparatory exercises of the soul, had directed this extraordinary personage into the light and liberty of the gospel ; and fitted him for the great work, to which he was called. At the same time it seems a certain fact, that the Saxon Reformer was not induced to act the part, which has given so much celebrity to his name, from motives of personal malice, or of ambition, or avarice, but purely from the fear of God, from a conscientious regard to evangelical truth, from a zeal for the divine glory, and for the profit of the souls of his fellow creatures.

There are two points, respecting Luther, on which all the most respectable, even of the Papal party, concur in their testimony. One is, that his learning, genius, and capacity, were of the first magnitude. The other is, that his life is allowed to be without any material blemish. Far be it, however, from the historian's design, to insinuate that there were no faults or defects in this character so much admired. Besides the ebullitions of native depravity, in the confession of which no man was ever more earnest than Luther, all real Christians have their infirmities and their faults, which cost them much inward pain and sorrow. The very candid and accurate memorialist, Seckendorf, defies all the adversaries of Luther to fix any just censure on his character, except what may be ranked under two heads ; namely, a disposition to be angry, and an indulgence in jesting. Beyond all doubt Luther was of

a choleric temper, and too often gave away to this constitutional evil, as he himself bitterly laments.

Humane, generous, and placable, he was rarely diverted from the path of equity ; and notwithstanding the uncommon vehemence of his temper, he was often submissive, and condescending. With an exquisite sensibility, and readiness of conception, with a zeal and an imagination, that never remitted their ardor, he was most perfectly free from enthusiasm ; and with a great capacity and unparalleled intrepidity he seems to have been devoid of ambition, and contented to live all his days, in very moderate circumstances.

Tetzel, the Dominican, alarmed at the publication of Luther's theses, opposed to them one hundred and six propositions, in which he attempted to refute the arguments of the Augustine monk ; and not content with this, by virtue of inquisitorial authority, he also directed Luther's compositions to be burnt. The minds of many were incensed against him, and he received various warnings and remonstrances. But notwithstanding these, he persevered in the traffic and with augmented industry ; and so much incensed the minds of Luther's disciples, at Wittemburg, that they ventured, by way of retaliation, to burn publicly his propositions with every mark of disapprobation and ignominy.

Luther never did things by halves. Accordingly, as the affair of selling indulgences had laid firm hold of his mind, he could neither quiet his uneasiness, nor smother his indignation. He still continued to preach, and to write on the same subject. During the year 1518, he went to Heidelberg, and was courteously received by Wolfgang, the brother of the elector Palatine. A general assembly of Augustine monks had been called at that place, and a providential opportunity was afforded of propagating divine truth. While

re, Luther wrote a number of propositions, in which capital object was to demonstrate the doctrine of ification before God, by faith alone, and not by our

works or deservings. A public dispute took place, a large concourse of people attended, and a number of learned men bore part in the disputation. Among the hearers were Martin Bucer and John Brentius, men afterward eminent in the work of the Reformation.— These, and other persons, who in process of time became celebrated theologians, admired the acuteness, promptitude, and meekness of Luther ; were struck with the truths of the gospel, which were new to their ears, and desired farther instruction of him in private. This was the seed time of the gospel in the Palatinate, and these were the beginnings of the Reformation.

While the cause of evangelical truth was thus making gradual advances in Germany, two celebrated Romanists, Eckius and Prierias, took up their pens against the theses of Luther, who, by these means, was led into a fresh literary contest. Luther published elaborate answers on all the disputed points, and managed this part of the controversy with much moderation and gentleness.

Leo X. at first, beheld the ecclesiastical disputes in Germany with the utmost indifference ; and showed himself indolent and improvident in defending the Papal jurisdiction.

But the clergy beheld them with very different emotions, and attacked Luther with all the virulence of enraged and bigoted Roman Catholics. They represented the growing heresy as becoming incurable by any of the milder methods. Penal and compulsory remedies, they said, were absolutely necessary ; and exhorted the Pontiff, by means of the sword and of fire, to deliver mankind from the detestable innovator. Many of the monks joined in this clamor, and with incessant vociferation exclaimed, “ Heresy ! Blasphemy ! Schism !”

Not only the avaricious venders of indulgences vociferated against Luther, but from all quarters, complaints of the progress of heresy were sent to Rome. Even the Emperor, Maximilian I. represented to the

pope, how necessary his interference had become. The Augustine monk, he said, was disseminating heretical and destructive doctrines ; was obstinate in adhering to his opinions, and active in propagating them ; and had made many converts, even among persons of rank and distinction.

At length the Roman Pontiff was roused from his state of indolence and security ; and his imprudence, at this critical moment, seems almost the consequence of judicial infatuation. At once he passed from the extremes of neglect and indifference, to those of tyrannical violence and temerity. He ordered Luther to appear at Rome, within sixty days, to answer for himself before certain judges, although, he had previously been condemned as an heretic.

Our Reformer took the wisest method to protect himself against the impending storm. He instantly sent an account of the pope's citation to his friend Spalatinus, who was then with the elector Frederic at the diet of Augsburg ; and in the strongest terms, requested, that through the interposition of the prince, his cause might be heard in Germany, and not at Rome. Frederick the Wise understood the arts and practices of the court of Rome, and was convinced of the propriety, and even the necessity of seconding Luther's wishes. Accordingly, he urged the competency of a German tribunal, in an ecclesiastical controversy of that nature ; and it seems entirely owing to the address, the penetration, and the firmness of this great prince, that the Roman Pontiff consented that Cardinal Cajetan, who was then his legate at Augsburg, should take cognizance of the matter. If the delinquent showed proper marks of penitence and submission, he was to be kindly received again into the bosom of the church ; but if he refused to appear before his appointed judge, the legate was commissioned then to pronounce publicly against him and his adherents, all thunders and anathemas of papal indignation.

The elector of Saxony conducted himself, throughout this difficult transaction, with the most extraordinary discretion. Hoping, that an accommodation might take place between the contending parties, he promised the pope's legate, that he would take effectual care to place the supposed heretic before him for examination at Augsburg. At the same time he made ample provision for the safety of Luther, and even obtained for him a promise of safe conduct from the emperor.

At the first interview, Luther prostrated himself before the Cardinal, and was courteously received. But at the same time, he was required to retract his errors, to avoid them in future, and to abstain from every thing, which might disturb the peace of the church.

The heaviest charge, brought against him, seems to have been, that he transgressed the bull of Clement VI. in which had been defined the nature and extent of indulgences. Luther replied to this charge, that the holy Scripture, which he could produce in support of his own doctrines, had abundantly more weight with him than the authority of the pope. Cajetan exalted the authority of the pope above all councils, above the church, and even above the Scriptures themselves. Luther insisted on the authority of Scripture. He owned, that he might have erred, but thought it reasonable, that his error should be pointed out on Scriptural ground, before he was required to recant. By frowns and manaces, Cajetan endeavored to intimidate the determined mind of the Saxon Reformer. Nothing but a recantation would satisfy the offended legate. Finding that he could not effect this, he ordered Luther to depart, and come no more into his presence, unless he was determined to recant.

A short time after Luther's last appearance before the cardinal, a report was spread, that notwithstanding the engagement of a safe conduct, he was to be seized and confined in irons. He then wrote to the Cardinal, pointed out all the recantation he could

CENTURY XVI.

CHAP. I.

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PRELIMINARIES.

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threatenings, had now recourse to arts and negotiation; and appointed as a new *légit* Charles Miltitz, a Saxon knight. His first endeavor was to bring over the elector Frederic to the Roman party; but failing in this attempt, he had several conferences with Luther, which proved fruitless as to the essential points. The only effect, of these negotiations, seems to have been, that the elector of Saxony and of Treves agreed to defer the complete examination of the matters in dispute, to the first German diet of the new emperor Charles V.; and that in the mean time, Luther should write a submissive letter to the pope.

Harrassed with doubts, and perfectly aware of the danger that threatened him, Luther would have given all the world for a sound, a discreet counsellor. Of the danger he sought no partner; but alas! his best, and wisest friends, when pressed closely concerning the most critical and perilous part of the contest, absolutely stood aloof.

While the pope's nuncio was negotiating a reconciliation in Germany, Tetzel, the wretched subaltern, whose scandalous conduct had so much disgraced his employers, met with the reward, which frequently awaits the ministers of iniquity. He found himself deserted by all the world, fell sick, wasted away, and died of a broken heart.

The name of Eckius has already been mentioned among the adversaries of Luther. This able and learned docto^r of divinity had formerly been the friend of our Reformer; but a thirst for fame, and a prospect of worldly advantage had seduced him from the cause of truth. Relying on the brilliancy of his own talents, and the popularity of his cause, he earnestly sought for a public exhibition of theological skill; and with this view, challenged Carolstad, the colleague and adherent of Luther, and even Luther himself, to try their strength with him in a contest on ~~in~~ dispute. Carolstad was a doctor of divi-

nity, and archdeacon of Wittemburg ; and is esteemed one of the first open defenders of Luther. The challenge was accepted ; and George, duke of Saxony, uncle of the elector, offered the combatants the city of Leipsic, as the scene of debate, with an engagement for their security, and a promise of every convenience. Luther obtained leave to be present at the contest as a spectator ; but was expressly denied the grant of safe conduct if he attempted to appear in the character of a disputant. The assembly was splendid ; the expectations of people were highly raised ; and it was vainly imagined, that some decision would be made concerning the subjects of contention.

This disputation continued for six days, during which time, the superior eloquence and acuteness of Eckius seems to have afforded a temporary triumph to the enemies of the Reformation. Flushed with success and thirsting for glory, this champion of the papal system came to Luther at his lodgings, and with an air of confidence, said, "I understand you will not dispute with me in public." "How can I, dispute with you," said Luther, "When the duke George refuses me my request of safe conduct." Eckius, replied, "If I am not to combat with you, I will spend no more time on Carolstad. Suppose I could obtain the public faith for your safety, would you then meet me and try your strength?" Luther consented, and very soon after, he had the Duke's leave to take Carolstad's place in the public debate.

This second theological conflict was carried on for ten days, with uncommon ardor, and without intermission. Among the articles of controversy were the doctrines of purgatory, and indulgences ; the nature of repentance, and remission of sins ; and particularly, the foundation of the supremacy of the Roman Pontiffs.

Eckius was so forcibly impressed with the reasonings of Luther, and especially with the neat, and well digested order in which his materials were arranged,

that he was compelled to acknowledge, before a splendid audience, the qualifications and attainments of his reverend opponent.

The victory of this contest was claimed on both sides. However, it is sufficiently evident, that the Roman party were not only defeated, but shamefully disgraced; and from this period the bitterness and enmity of Eckius against his opponent, suddenly increased beyond all bounds.

That some good might result from the contentions at Leipsic, and that mankind might be less bewildered in the mazes of subtle disputation, this diligent servant of God determined to review carefully all his own positions, which had been the subject of debate at Leipsic; and to publish them with concise explanations, and with arguments in their support, consisting of appeals to Scripture and ecclesiastical history.

These publications of Luther were circulated throughout Germany, and were read with the greatest avidity by all ranks and orders. Eckius, and other advocates of the Roman catholic cause, answered the heretic with great heat and indignation. Luther replied with the promptitude and decision, and also with the zeal and confidence of a man who was perfectly master of the arguments on both sides of the questions in dispute; felt deeply interested in the establishment of truth, and had thoroughly examined the foundations of his opposition to the prevailing corruptions. By this means, the discussions at Leipsic were detailed with minuteness, and continued with spirit; they every where became topics of common conversation; and as Luther constantly appealed to plain sense, and the written word of God, the scholastic subtleties of Eckius lost their weight and reputation among the people.

The elector of Saxony was the only prince, who publicly favored the Reformation. His mind had much exercised about divine things, even before Wittemburg theologian had dared to expose and

withstand the corruptions of the Roman see.. With much diligence and constant prayer he had read the word of God ; and was extremely displeased with the usual modes of interpreting Scripture. He had a deep sense of his own weakness and sinfulness, and felt much anxiety, that the faith of Christ might be preached in its purity among the people ; still this excellent personage remained in bondage to Papal authority and Papal superstitions. And hence, though his views of the Bible were in perfect harmony with those of Luther, and though he agreed with him that the shameful abuses ought to be corrected, dangerous errors exposed, salutary truths propagated, and mankind put in possession of the words of eternal life, he nevertheless, continued to feel most disquieting apprehensions, lest in accomplishing these important purposes, offence should be given to the Roman Pontiff.

The celebrated Philip Melancthon, who is always numbered among the most powerful instruments of the Reformation, was present at the public disputation of Eckius. Already indeed he had favored Luther's intentions of teaching pure Christianity, and of delivering it from the reigning darkness of superstition. The conferences at Leipsic seem to have had a mighty effect in first determining the mind of this elegant scholar to employ his talents in the study of theology ; and in leading him to embark in the cause of religious liberty with zeal and fidelity. From the period of this famous public disputation, he applied himself most intently to the interpretation of the Scripture, and the defence of pure Christian doctrine ; and is justly esteemed, by Protestants, to have been the most powerful coadjutor of the Saxon Reformer. His mild and peaceable temper, his aversion to schismatic contentions, his reputation for piety and knowledge, and above all his happy art of exposing error, and maintaining truth in the most perspicuous language ; all these endowments concurred to render him eminently serviceable to the revival of the religion of Christ.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PROGRESS OF THE REFORMATION TILL THE CONCLUSION OF THE DIET AT WORMS.

MILTITZ, the pope's nuncio, was not inattentive to the object of his mission. He at first, came armed with seventy attendants for the express purpose of seizing Luther, and carrying him prisoner to Rome. As this scheme failed, on account of the extreme popularity of Luther, he then did his utmost, by way of kindness and condescension, to draw a recantation of errors from the Reformer. But neither promises nor threatenings materially affected the firm determinations of Martin Luther. He gradually proceeded in the work of Reformation; and toward the end of the year 1519, he began to preach on the propriety of administering to the laity the communion in both kinds. This step gave great offence to some of the Papal adherents; but Luther steadily followed the track pointed out to him by a diligent and persevering study of the Holy Scriptures.

When we view this champion of Christian liberty calumniated, irritated, provoked, hunted down, and almost struggling for life, it is with infinite satisfaction; that we find the elegant pen of Melancthon beginning to appear in reply to some of Luther's adversaries. But notwithstanding this, the popish party persevered in their endeavors to silence or destroy the Saxon Reformer; and Luther finally consented to be quiet, provided, that they would not insist on evangelical truth's lying dormant; and would permit Christians to walk in the paths of salvation without persecution.

Amidst the various distresses, which the attacks of persecution occasioned, several circumstances took place at the beginning of the year 1520, which tended greatly to encourage the Saxon Reformer. First, the appearance of Melancthon against the papal ad-

herents ; secondly, several elaborate epistles of Erasmus, written to persons of learning and eminence, represent Luther in the most respectful terms ; thirdly, several German noblemen, who had imbibed Lutheran principles, and had heard of the dangers to which the Reformer's life was exposed, stepped forward, at this crisis, and offered him their protection.

The active spirit of Luther was continually engaged in the investigation of evangelical truth. Hearing of the design of the court of Rome to publish his condemnation, he found himself compelled to proceed in his opposition to the established system. He saw no possibility of retreating with a safe conscience ; all his offers of peace and reconciliation were rejected with disdain ; and his bitterest enemies were countenanced, and applauded by the pontiff. He determined, therefore, to do his utmost to open the eyes of all ranks and orders of men respecting the abominable practices of the Roman hierarchy. Accordingly in the year 1520, he published, in his native language, a little treatise, in which he addressed the emperor and German nobility. In this work, Luther collects a history of the numerous corruptions, which for ages, had been creeping into the church ; describes the miseries, which Germany had suffered from the various wars which had been occasioned by intriguing and ambitious pontiffs ; exhorts the whole nation to make a stand against the encroachments of the pope ; lays open the scandalous manners and practices of the court of Rome, and describes the cardinals as a company of useless men, who drained Italy and Germany of their riches, and disgraced their profession by their vices. This treatise comprehends likewise a selection of distinct articles concerning the reformation of ecclesiastical affairs, the encouragement of useful seminaries of learning, and the study of theology.

Thus by a persevering opposition, equally firm and prudent, the Saxon Reformer gradually subverted the

acter of Luther, showed the unreasonableness of such demands, and entreated, that they would no longer persist in those measures. He then advised, that the business should be committed to learned, pious, impartial, disinterested judges, who might meet at a convenient place, have the parties present, with the public faith pledged for their safety; and then added, "Whenever this supposed heretic shall be convicted, by solid Scriptural arguments, the elector of Saxony will be the last person to protect him."

While the minds of men of all orders and ranks, were agitated with ecclesiastical contentions, the active and ardent disposition of Luther could, by no means, permit him to be an indolent spectator. The interest of the pure gospel of Christ, the reputation of the Reformer, and even his personal safety, were all at stake. Accordingly, his first defensive step, was to appeal from the sentence of the Roman pontiff to the superior authority of a general council. He appeals from him,

1. As a rash, iniquitous, and tyrannical judge;
2. As a hardened heretic, and apostate;
3. As an enemy, antichrist, and an opposer of the sacred Scriptures;
4. As a proud and blasphemous despiser of the sacred church of God, and of all legal councils.

Luther's next step was to publish, in answer to the edict, two small tracts, in which he exposes, with great spirit, the injustice, arrogance, and despotism of the Roman court.

In another tract, he boldly asserts the authority of Scripture, explains to mankind its proper use, and impresses on their minds its immense importance. Indeed, the light of the apostolic age, began to beam on the nations of Europe, and was finally attended with the most salutary consequences to millions then unborn.

But the asperity of Luther's style threw a shade over all his virtues; and though the rudeness and

foundations of property; and Germany saw, with admiration, the display of a profound practical knowledge from a person whose hours had been spent chiefly in the schools, and in the monasteries.

On the fifteenth day of June, 1520, Leo X. published the famous damnatory edict against Luther, which, in the event, proved fatal to the established hierarchy. This had been a subject of hesitancy at Rome, nearly three years, during all which time, "the word of God had grown and multiplied."

Forty-one propositions, extracted from Luther's works, are therein condemned as heretical, scandalous, and offensive to pious ears; all persons are forbidden to read his writings upon pain of excommunication; such, as had any of them in their custody, commanded to burn them; and he himself, if not within sixty days send or bring his reform to Rome, is pronounced an excommunicated, and delivered destruction of the flesh.

The edict met with different parts of Germany. The publication of it was and so odious to the Romans in this country that a reluctant audience

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To carry forward, and if possible to accelerate this glorious revolution in favor of Christian truth, was the great object of Luther. While the several illustrious monarchs, above mentioned, were struggling for pre-eminence in power and grandeur, his contest was entirely with the rulers of the darkness of this world, and with spiritual wickedness in high places. Few men, of those who have been persecuted for righteousness' sake, have surrendered themselves and their cause into the hand of God with more perfect resignation than Luther did. His affairs were coming fast to a crisis ; his life was in the most imminent danger ; and he had but one patron of any considerable rank or distinction ; yet, can we nowhere trace in him the smallest anxiety on account of his personal safety. Those moments of suspense, in which most persons are found incapable of study or cool deliberation, our industrious theologian improved as a precious little interval of time, granted him, for the most important purpose, of further enlightening mankind ; and while his friends trembled for the issue of the next German diet, he himself seems to have rejoiced, that, even a short season was thus afforded him for pursuing his studies in divinity. Deeply impressed with these views, the Saxon theologian applied himself to the study of the sacred pages, with redoubled ardor and assiduity. Alexander had burnt his books ; but that very circumstance served to increase men's curiosity for reading them, and their author's zeal and industry in reconsidering and republishing the doctrines he had taught. From the election of Charles V. in the year 1519, till the commencement of his first diet, the following year, Luther was industriously employed in writing and publishing an incredible number of sermons, paraphrases, and polemical tracts. His excellent commentary, on the epistle to the Galatians, was one of them. It was read with great avidity, and was very instrumental of promoting the cause of Protestantism.

This treatise will abundantly satisfy every inquirer, that the grand and fundamental point, which the Reformer had most at heart in all his labors, contests and dangers, was the doctrine of justification by faith alone.

The eyes of all Europe were fixed on the diet of Worms. That general and astonishing revolution of sentiment, which was taking place in the minds of the people, had proceeded with such incredible rapidity, that it became necessary for emperors and princes to take public cognizance of transactions, which could no longer be buried in obscurity. Accordingly Charles V. in his circular letters to the electors and other members of the diet, informed them, that he had summoned the assembly of the Empire, for the purpose of concerting with them, the most proper measures for checking the progress of those new and dangerous opinions, which threatened to disturb the peace of Germany, and to overturn the religion of their ancestors.

After the diet had met, a considerable time was spent in formalities, and in making some general regulations respecting the internal police of the empire. They then proceeded to take into consideration the religious questions and controversies. The papal legates insisted on an immediate condemnation of the man, who had so long disturbed the peace of the church; and who, for more than six months, had been under actual sentence of excommunication, as an incorrigible heretic.

But the members of the diet openly withheld the pope's advocates in an attempt so unjustifiable. Such a proceeding, they considered as inconsistent with justice, and unauthorized by precedent.

Alexander then observed, that in spite of the pontiff's utmost endeavors for four years past, to free the world from this great evil, it was daily spreading itself more and more, and appeared to be desperate and incurable. This detestable heresy, he said, ought to be exposed to public execration; and so ought its de-

emperor has published a mandate to frighten me. But Christ, nevertheless, lives ; and I will enter Worms, though all the gates of hell, and all the powers of darkness oppose."

The hearts of Luther's best friends began to fail them, as the danger approached. At Oppenheim, near Worms, they solicited him, in the most vehement manner, to venture no farther. What favor could he expect from men, who had already begun to break their word with him ? The pope had published a definitive edict against him ; and the emperor, in compliance, had ordered all his writings to be seized ; and to disgrace him still more, the imperial mandate, as well as the papal edict, were every where put up for the public information.

It was under such circumstances, and to such solicitations, that our Saxon hero, with his usual intrepidity, returned that ever memorable answer, namely, "Though I should be obliged to encounter at Worms as many devils, as there are tiles upon the houses of that city, this will not deter me from my fixed purpose of appearing there."

Luther arrived at Worms, on the sixteenth of April, 1521 ; and as he stepped from his vehicle, he said these words in the presence of a numerous concourse of people, "God will be on my side."

It has been truly observed, that the reception, he there met with, was such as he might have esteemed a full reward for all his labors, if vanity and the love of applause, had been the principles which influenced his conduct. Immense crowds, daily flocked to see him ; and his apartments were constantly filled with visitors of the highest rank. In short, he was considered as a prodigy of wisdom, and respected as one born to enlighten the understandings of mankind, and direct their sentiments.

Luther lodged with the Teutonic knights, and on the day after his arrival, was conducted to the diet by the marshal of the empire.

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He was succeeded by George Washington, who became the first president of the United States.

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not now to be questioned ; that he was required simply, and clearly to say, whether he would or would not retract his opinions. Luther instantly replied, " My answer, shall be direct and plain. I cannot think myself bound to believe either the pope or his councils : for it is very clear, that they have not only often erred but often contradicted themselves. Therefore, unless I am convinced by Scripture, or clear reason, my belief is so confirmed by the Scriptural passages I have produced, and my conscience so determined to abide by the word of God, that I neither can, nor will retract any thing ; for it is neither safe nor innocent to act against a man's conscience." Luther then pronounced these words, " Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. May God help me. Amen."

Having made some farther attempts to obtain a recantation of errors from Luther, night came on and the diet broke up.

During the whole of this interesting scene, the special partisans of the pope, were filled with indignation; and many of the Spanish Roman catholics followed Luther, as he returned from the tribunal, and showed their enmity by long continued sneers and hisses.

On the two following days, incredible pains were taken by the princes, electors, and deputies, of various orders, to shake the resolution of this hero of the Reformation. But he continued inflexible. Neither threats, nor exhortations, nor promises, availed to make him change his resolution, or vary from the answer, he had so often given, respecting the absolute necessity he was under of abiding by the sole authority of the sacred Scriptures.

His efforts ineffectual, the emperor sent to Luther ordering him to leave the diet, " notwithstanding the dmonitions and entreaties, he persisted in his opinion, and would not return into the house,"

The enemies of the Reformation, exceedingly exasperated with Luther, intended to effect his ruin; but the elector of Saxony foresaw the rising storm, and contrived a plan of concealing him from the fury of his enemies. The secret was revealed to Luther on the evening before he left Worms. Three or four horsemen, in whom Frederic could confide, disguised themselves in masks, and contrived to meet the persecuted monk on his return home. They played their part well, rushed out of the wood, secured Luther as if were by force, and carried him into the castle of Wartburg. This business was managed with so much address and fidelity, that he was completely secured from the effects of the impending storm.

The popish adherents were, by this time, doubly exasperated with Luther. But Alexander, in particular, was exceedingly enraged. To appease this offended legate, Charles employed him to draw up the final sentence against Luther, usually called the edict of Worms.

The edict, as might be expected, was penned by Alexander, with all possible rancor and malice. The first part of it states, that it is the duty of the emperor to protect religion, and extinguish heresies. The second part relates to the pains, that had been taken to bring back the heretic to repentance; and the third proceeds to the condemnation of Martin Luther in the strongest terms.

Alexander introduces into this composition, the most acrimonious personal invectives, he could invent. He represents Luther, not as a man, but as a devil in the shape of a man, who had put on the habit of a monk for the express purpose of ruining mankind.

While the advocates of papal despotism, were endeavoring to crush the Reformation, and even to take away the life of the Reformer, his books, which had dispersed in abundance among the distant nations, and translated into various languages, were pro-

dueing the most surprising, and happy effects. Not only in Saxony, but in Denmark, Bohemia, Pomerania, and towns situated on the Rhine, there were found intelligent expositors of the word of God, and faithful preachers of the glad tidings of salvation. At Strasburg, Matthias Callius defended the principles of Luther with great spirit and freedom. In his apology, published in 1523, he had the courage to declare, that the example of all Germany was in his favor; and that notwithstanding the edict of Worms, there was not a city nor monastery, nor university, nor even a house nor family, in which there were not some of his followers. Even in many cities of Belgium, where the greatest severities were used, to extirpate the new sect, the pure doctrine of the gospel maintained its ground against all the powers of darkness. This was a glorious season. The Spirit of God was at work with many hearts; and to those pious souls, who, amidst the thick clouds of superstition and ignorance, were sincerely intending to serve God, the light of the divine word must have been an unspeakable consolation. The operations of this heavenly light gives ease to the burdened conscience, dispels all slavish fears, and puts the mind in possession of the kingdom of God.

CHAPTER V.

FROM THE CONCLUSION OF THE DIET AT WORMS TO THE DEATH OF THE ELECTOR OF SAXONY.

THE followers of Luther were greatly disheartened at the sudden disappearance of their leader. An anxious solicitude pervaded their minds, not only for Luther personally, but for the cause of truth. The distressing apprehensions, of losing such an instructor

at that critical time produced the most melancholy and inauspicious forebodings. Various reports were circulated respecting him, but the one most prevalent and least changeable was, that assassins had laid wait for, seized, and murdered him.

During this season of anxiety among his friends, Luther labored with indefatigable industry; he translated the New Testament into the German language, published many new books, confirmed his disciples in their attachment to him, and defended the truth with unabating ardor.

He frequently heard from his friends, and was consoled with the intelligence, that the courage and success of his disciples, and progress of his doctrines continued to increase. At the same time, he heard reports that were calculated to damp his joy; namely, that the divines of Paris had passed a solemn protest on his writings; and that Henry VIII. of England was determined to oppose the progress of Lutheran tenets by his great authority, and suppress them by his scholastic weapons. Luther, however, was neither overawed by the reputation of the University of Paris, nor frightened by the dignity of the Sovereign of England. He soon published his animadversions on both. These proceedings excited increased attention, and in spite of the united combinations both of civil and ecclesiastical powers, the Lutheran opinions daily acquired new converts in every part of Europe.

In the year 1522 Luther left what he called his Patmos, and returned to Wittemburg without the consent or even the knowledge of his patron and protector Frederic. He immediately acquainted that prince with this transaction, and with the motives, which compelled him no longer to remain a concealed spectator of transactions, which oppressed his mind with the most painful apprehensions. The distracted

state of the infant church induced him to take this step. The papal powers were cruel, artful,

and active ; the Reformers were, for the most part, unskillful politicians, and some of them injudicious and headstrong. The fair prospect of the Reformation had become dark and cloudy ; and it became absolutely necessary that the most skilful pilot should repair to the helm. But the cautious Frederic, astonished at his unexpected return, dreaded, with trembling anxiety, the most deplorable consequences. However, he was soon delivered from this painful anxiety ; and saw that Luther's return to Wittemburg was attended with the most salutary consequences. Tranquility and concord were again restored to the church ; and the people of that place heard their beloved pastor with increased pleasure and advantage. His personal circumstances were, at this time, peculiarly distressing. In a letter to a friend he says, "I am now encompassed with no guards, but those of heaven ; I live in the midst of enemies, who have a legal power of killing me every hour."

But amidst all these difficulties, he remitted not his usual vigor and activity. In the course of the year 1522, he published the German version of the New Testament ; and then proceeded to the translation of the Old Testament. The whole performance was a monument of that astonishing industry and perseverance, which ever marked the character of this Reformer. The effects of this labor were soon felt in Germany ; immense numbers, who had groped in darkness, now read in their own language, the precious word of God, and saw with their own eyes the just foundation of the Lutheran doctrine. A more acceptable present could scarcely have been conferred on men just emerging from darkness. The example was soon followed by Reformers of other nations ; and thus the real knowledge of Scripture was facilitated in a surprising degree. Emser, a doctor of Leipsic, endeavored to depreciate the credit of Luther's version ; and the popish princes, within the

bounds of their respective dominions, ordered the work to be burnt. George, Duke of Saxony, incensed at the growth of Lutheranism, began to encourage the most violent proceedings against them ; and set the example of a persecution, which was carried on with the most unrelenting cruelty. Emboldened by the vigorous proceedings of the duke, his bigoted ecclesiastics raged against the Lutherans with increased violence and rancor. In Flanders, the persecution was extreme. Many, on account of their adherence to Lutheranism, were either put to death, or deprived of their property by the most tyrannical proceedings.

In proportion as the tempest thickened, and daily grew more dangerous, our Reformer stood in need of fresh supplies of courage and activity. The persecutors were powerful and active, and meditated the destruction both of the teacher and his followers. Their ears were deaf to the expostulations of reason, and their hearts hardened against the cries of humanity. But relying on an arm of everlasting strength, Luther labored, with persevering industry, to impress important truths on the minds of the people.— Distinct in his conceptions, eloquent in expressing them, and fearless of danger ; he confounded his adversaries, instructed the ignorant, and every day brought proselytes to the simplicity of the gospel.

Leo X. died in the year 1521 ; and was succeeded by Adrian, a man of far greater sobriety and purity of manners, than had, for a long time, been known among the pontiffs. Adrian was, however, virulent in his opposition to the Reformation, and sent a legate to the imperial diet, then assembled at Nuremberg, with a diploma addressed to the German princes. In this diploma, or briefe, he inserted the most virulent invectives against Luther ; exhorted them to execute the sentence pronounced against him by the edict of Worms, extinguish the devouring heresy, and bring to a sense of his duty, the archheretic and his

abettors. But the German princes could not be frightened into an act of such flagrant injustice. They had been brought to see the light, and took a bold and resolute stand against the prince of darkness. They told the pope's nuncio, that Luther was held in high estimation among the people; that if any harsh measures should be adopted, there would soon be a general outcry; the people would interpret such a procedure as a certain prelude to the suppression of evangelical light and truth; and Germany would be involved in tumults, rebellions, and civil wars. At the same time, they advised the pope to attend to a multitude of other evils; and, as the most efficacious remedy, to appoint a free, godly, and Christian council, give each member free liberty to advise for the glory of God and the salvation of souls; and then they sent an accusation of a hundred grievances to the court of Rome.

The transactions of Nuremberg were favorable to the Reformation, and at the same time, produced much discontent at Rome. The pope was, on the one hand, astonished at the obstinacy of the Reformers; and on the other, disgusted with the dissolute manners of his courtiers; and not being able to correct either the one or the other, sincerely wished himself in a more humble station. He died a short time after receiving an account of what had passed at Nuremberg.

The Saxon Elector and the Saxon Reformer soon after found themselves in the most perilous situation. A combination was formed by the pope, the emperor, and the bigoted German princes, for the express purpose of crushing the infant Reformation, and every power, that was friendly to its progress. However, these clouds of adversity were dispersed by the wise disposition of that Providence, which had determined to break the rod of oppression, and bestow on the nations the blessing of Christian liberty. The emperor was too much involved in schemes of ambition to give any serious attention to the contests in Germany;

without his co-operation, the rest of the confederates could effect nothing decisive. The apprehensions of Frederic, and his ministers, respecting their safety, were relieved; and the patient and industrious Reformers had only to struggle with their usual difficulties.

During this trying scene the Saxon champion looked continually to the protection of that Being, on whom he relied; and exhibited a noble example of Christian faith, courage, and resignation.

Charles V. began, at this time, to astonish all Europe with the blaze of secular glory; and was, at the same time, cruelly persecuting the people of God throughout Flanders. But the Christian reader, who finds no satisfaction in contemplating such scenes of ambition and cruelty, will turn from them, and behold the light of gospel truth, which began, at this time to dawn on the more distant nations of Europe.

In the year 1522, at the request of Christiern II. king of Denmark, a preacher, named Martin, was sent from Wittemburg; and his evangelical labors, among the Danes, received the royal approbation and encouragement. Under Christiern III. the blessed change of the religious establishment was complete in that kingdom.

In Sweden the renowned Gustavus Vasa, (having in youth lived in exile, and received instruction from the Reformers,) no sooner found himself in firm possession of the throne, than he determined to reform the church. He caused the Scriptures to be translated into the Swedish language, and omitted no means for enlightening the minds of the people. The effects were rapid, salutary, and decisive; and Sweden, from that day, has ranked invariably among the Protestant nations.

In the year 1522, the news of the glorious Reformation had reached Hungary, and excited, in the minds of that people, a desire to be released from the chains of popish darkness, and made partakers of a religion,

unfertilized with superstition and idolatry. Several young students of that country resorted to Wittemburg; and having received instruction from the voice and pen of Luther, returned to their country, and erected the standard of Christian liberty. Numbers flocked around it; a considerable reformation took place in different parts of the kingdom; and Hungary was blessed with refreshing beams of gospel light.

Thus we see nations released from the bondage of popery, exulting in Christian light and liberty. The glorious Reformation continued to spread far and wide; almost all the European nations hailed the dawn of truth, and exulted in the prospect of spiritual freedom.

In the year 1523, Faber, Favel, and a few others, began to sow the seeds of Christianity in France. But the Helvetic and Calvinistic denominations soon became so prevalent, as almost to exclude Lutheranism from the nation. In the origin of these denominations, as distinguished from Lutheranism, there existed no material difference of sentiment. However, a small difference arose, concerning the manner, in which the body and blood of Christ were present in the eucharist, and in a few years grew into a violent and tedious controversy. This dispute, which has been termed the *sacramentary contest*, produced the most deplorable animosities; and terminated at length in a fatal division of those sincere friends of the Reformation, who had embarked in the same cause, and who equally possessed the essentials of godliness.

Luther rejected the doctrine of Transubstantiation; but nevertheless, maintained, that with the elements of bread and wine, the real body and blood of Christ were received by the partakers of the Lord's Supper. His first and most violent opposer was Carolstadt.

During the same year, that the light of the Reformation first dawned upon France, John Brisman was called by Providence, to assist in spreading the glad

tidings of salvation in Prussia. In the autumn of the year, this pious divine preached the first evangelical sermon, that was heard at Koningsburg, and continued to labor in that part of the country for many years, to the great advantage of Christian truth and liberty.

In the same year, also, Julius de Medieis succeeded Adrian in the popedom. At another diet held at Nuremburg, a second attempt was made, by the pope and emperor, to enforce the edict of Worms. But the bold and intrepid resolution of the Germans rendered abortive their attempts; and Luther's personal safety, instead of being endangered, was abundantly meliorated.

Never, perhaps, were the resolutions of any assembly received with less approbation, than those of this diet at Nuremburg. The emperor expressed his utmost indignation at what had passed; and the news, at Rome, produced the greatest alarm and astonishment.

These proceedings occasioned the division of Germany into two great parties, weakened the forces of the empire; laid the foundations of many incurable suspicions and jealousies; but was nevertheless, under Providence, extremely favorable to the Reformation.

During this turbulent season, and amidst many private afflictions, Luther stood constantly at the helm of the infant Protestant churches, and directed their course, with a watchful eye. He sent into Prussia faithful laborers, who preached with such glorious success, that in a letter to a friend, Luther says, "By the united efforts of the prince and the bishop; and through the wonderful and inexpressible goodness of God, the gospel moves in full sail through Prussia."

During the years 1524, and 1525, the situation of Germany was alarming beyond description. The several kingdoms and states were at variance respecting the grand tenets of the whole papal system; divisions existed, even among the reformers.

themselves; and in addition to these, immense crowds of ignorant and seditious peasants; associated with multitudes of licentious and dissolute enthusiasts, became so outrageous, that there was an almost certain prospect of an immediate civil war.

In the year 1525, this war commenced. A prodigious multitude in different parts of Germany arose, suddenly took arms against their lawful governors, and were guilty of the most horrid and barbarous actions. Their leader was the enthusiastic Munzer. He availed himself of the troubled state of the empire, and put himself at the head of the numerous and disconcerted rabble; inflamed their passions by violent harangues, and by pretending to foresee certain success, rendered them altogether desperate, and outrageous.

At this interesting crisis, Luther wrote to the princes, magistrates, and people, exhorting them to fear God, and beware of sedition, and every heinous crime. His exhortations, however, did not avail to suppress the rising spirit of tumult and rebellion; the tempest appeared rather to thicken and portend a dreadful storm. The fanatical insurgents pulled down monasteries, castles and houses, murdered the nobles and dignitaries, and were guilty of multiplied acts of treason and barbarity.

The princes of the empire alarmed at their seditious cruelty, united their forces for the suppression and punishment of the insurgents. After a dreadful carnage, a vast multitude of the faction were met by the confederate princes, defeated in a pitched battle, and Munzer, their ringleader, taken and put to death.

This desolating war cost Germany the lives of more than 50,000 men.

The good elector of Saxony departed this life on the fifth of May, 1525, ten days before the defeat of Munzer. There is great reason to believe, that he died in the faith, hope, and humility of the gospel.

CHAPTER VI.

MARRIAGE OF LUTHER.

THE celibacy of the clergy was a subject, which very much agitated the mind of our Reformer. His tender conscience labored, for a long time, respecting the obligation of voluntary monastic vows. At length he became fully convinced, that they ought not to be observed; and from his Patmos issued that admirable tract on the subject, which gave a fatal blow to the whole papal system.

Convinced that it was his duty to instruct by example, as well as by precept, in the year 1525, Luther threw off his monastic vows, and entered into the matrimonial state. In a letter to a friend, he says, "In the opinion of some, I have made myself contemptible; but nevertheless, I trust angels smile, and demons weep, at what I have done."

It is astonishing how his enemies exulted on the occasion. They condemned him as a hardened sensualist, who had neither command of his passions, nor regard for his reputation. Some of his friends were exceedingly alarmed, and even wept on the occasion. But through the labors of Luther, and those of his Wittemburg coadjutors, the understandings of men were so much enlightened, and their prejudices so abated, that his example was soon followed by many of the clergy.

CHAPTER VII.

CONTROVERSY WITH ERASMUS.

EVERY student versed in the history of the Reformation, finds both instruction and amusement, in observing the conduct of Erasmus. On his merits, as a restorer of learning, it is scarcely possible to express ourselves too strongly. His well earned honors, in that respect, are beyond the reach either of calumny or envy. It is the purity of his Christian principles, and the integrity and conscientiousness of his motives, which are called in question.

The weak side of Erasmus was a disposition, at all times, to court the favor of persons of rank and distinction; and it was through their incessant importunities, that he was at length prevailed on, though with much reluctance, to enter the lists against Luther. The papal advocates, who had hitherto appeared in the controversy, had done their own cause no good.—The reformers were every day growing more bold and numerous. The ancient hierarchy was shaken to its very foundation, and it was become sufficiently manifest, that neither ecclesiastical menaces, nor ecclesiastical punishments, could retard the progress of the new doctrines. The wisest and most moderate of the Roman Catholics, saw plainly that the church had lost much of its credit with the people in general, and that nothing could materially serve their cause, but what would tend to regain the public opinion. For the purpose of accomplishing so important an object, they all, to a man, fixed their eyes on Erasmus. Not anxious respecting his private sentiments in religion, they were fully convinced of his qualifications for the task, they wished him to undertake. An extensive erudition, a perspicuous and eloquent style, and especially an

exquisite vein of sarcastic humor, eminently prepared this celebrated scholar, as the proper champion to engage Luther. Accordingly, neither pains nor artifice were spared to secure his services. Princes, and prelates, and cardinals, and even the pope himself, were most assiduous in touching those strings, the vibrations of which, they judged most likely to gratify his pride, stimulate his ambition, and awaken his natural timidity. These and similar multiplied and reiterated importunities, at length determined Erasmus to become an open adversary of the Reformers.

No, man, that ever lived, perhaps, was less disposed than Luther, to temporize with his adversaries in essential points ; yet in the instance of Erasmus, it is admitted, that he exercised extraordinary patience and forbearance. The reason is, Erasmus, by his writings against monks and friars, had been of considerable service in abating the attachment of mankind to popery. Moreover, he was one of the first literary characters in the world, and well deserves the thanks of all, who have a relish for classical learning. No wonder, therefore, that Luther, in the great business of the Reformation, should have been anxious to prevent so much weight from being placed in the opposite scale. But Erasmus grew every day more and more out of humor with the Lutherans. He had repeatedly declared that the church needed a reformation ; but he would never run any risk to forward the good cause. Hence, the Reformers became cold in their regards to him ; and he, in return, beheld with pique and jealousy the rapid progress of the new system. Mutual abuse and accusation were the unavoidable consequence of this state of things. By some, Erasmus was libelled as a deserter of the faith, and a parasite, who paid his court to popes, prelates, and cardinals, and might be hired for a morsel of bread to any purpose.

Hutten had taken the liberty of blaming Erasmus for too much regard to the court of Rome. This

was a very tender point; and the more provoking, first, because the fact was undeniable; and secondly, because the Romish faction really disliked him almost as much as they did Luther; notwithstanding that, the ecclesiastical dignitaries gave him good words, and fair promises, for the purpose of persuading him to take a decided part against the great Reformer.

Luther, by his sagacity, discovered distinctly the situation of the mind of Erasmus, thus puzzled, and distracted by a contrariety of motives. Reflecting on his character and situation, and hearing that he was about to publish his Diatribe, Luther, in an almost forlorn hope of persuading him to peace, determined, however, to make his last effort. For this purpose, he composed a memorable letter, quite in his own best style—clear, nervous, ingenuous, full of life, fire and spirit, and sent it to his classical adversary. It was a specimen of epistolary writing in perfect contrast to the manner of Erasmus, and must have vexed him not a little. Erasmus was constrained to allow that Martin Luther had written him a letter sufficiently civil; but that, for fear of his calumniators, he did not dare to answer him with equal civility,

In the Autumn of the year 1524, this elegant scholar published his dissertation, called the Diatribe, on the Freedom of the Will.

The authority of Erasmus, and not his arguments, determined Luther to publish an answer to the Diatribe. His reply is entitled, “On the Bondage of the Will.” This celebrated treatise made its appearance toward the close of the year 1525; and provoked Erasmus the more, as it was in some measure unexpected. The work was received with avidity, and the booksellers of Wittemburg, Augsburg, and Nuremberg, strove who could produce their numerous editions the fastest.

Though no man, in regard to beauty and elegance of style, will think of comparing Luther with Erasmus,

in general ; yet, in this particular instance, Luther's tract is abundantly more orderly, perspicuous, and nervous, than any of Erasmus' writings, on the same subject.

On the whole, there can be no doubt, but ~~Luther~~ was eventually the cause of much pain and vexation to Erasmus. His great admirers allow that the *Diatribe* is a feeble and timid production, and unworthy of its author. Accordingly, it gave offence to both parties, was esteemed by neither, and disappointed all the learned.

From the voluminous writings of Erasmus, many passages may be produced which prove that his faith was extremely loose and desultory ; and his profession of certain doctrines, the effect of custom and convenience, rather than of judgment and decision.

His writings abound with humorous levities ; and of his contradictory declarations there is no end.

Erasmus, Luther, and Melancthon, are unquestionably to be reckoned among the principal actors in the Reformation. The unhappy inconsistencies, which we have marked in the character of Erasmus, though extremely derogatory to his personal worth, in no wise, weaken the proofs of the great advantages which the cause of Christian liberty derived from certain parts of his labor.

Of Melancthon, it may be said, that integrity, piety, and discretion, were parts of his character ; for these virtues posterity do him ample justice ; at the same time, no one who knows him, will consider him as a model either of unusual firmness, or extraordinary penetration. The characters, both of Luther and of Erasmus, appear to have been much misunderstood. The asperity and positiveness of Luther, have had the effect of lowering him too much. The politeness and civility of Erasmus, have contributed to raise him too high ; and the propensity of his religious sentiments toward Pelagianism, secures him but too favorable a reception with many modern divines.

CHAPTER VIII.

PROGRESS OF THE REFORMATION.

JOHN, the new elector of Saxony, conducted the religious concerns of his dominions in a manner quite different from that of his brother and predecessor, Frederic. The latter connived at and tolerated, rather than avowed and established the alterations introduced by Luther, and his associates. But the former no sooner found himself in possession of the sovereign authority, than he exercised it with resolution and activity; formed new ecclesiastical constitutions, and modelled them on the principles of the great Reformer.

Happily this excellent prince was well qualified, by nature, for the part which he had to act at this critical juncture. For though the elector, John, is nowhere celebrated for his profound skill in the science of politics, yet, his moral endowments and steady temper have procured him, with posterity, the illustrious titles of the Good, and the Constant.

John the Constant had a most excellent coadjutor in his own son, John Frederic; who with the two names of his father, John, and his uncle, Frederic, seems to have possessed the united virtues of both.

The new elector suffered nothing to come in competition with the Reformation, as an object of his concern; and as he was undoubtedly the first prince in Germany, who both openly resisted the Popish doctrines and discipline, and established the new system of the Wittemburg theologian, he has been justly denominated the second Parent and Founder of the Lutheran church.

The laudable efforts of the elector and his son, were much encouraged by the friendly dispositions of their neighbour Philip, the landgrave of Hesse; who

had declared, that rather than be a deserter from the word of God, he would lose his wealth, his dominions, and even his life.

The magistrates of the several imperial cities adopted the Reformation in form. Innumerable towns followed the example of the cities; and the extraordinary zeal, piety, and prudence of many of their bishops, are recorded with veneration in the annals of pure religion.

CHAPTER IX.

WRITINGS OF LUTHER.

AMIDST the new ecclesiastical establishments and regulations, which Luther, under the auspices of the elector and his son, was rapidly introducing into Saxony, he still found time for preaching the word of God, and for producing various useful publications.

In his directions for reading the Scriptures, he says, "Let the Christian reader's first object always be to find out the literal meaning of the word of God; for this, and this alone, is the whole foundation of faith and of christian theology. It is the very substance of Christianity; the only thing which stands its ground in distress and temptation; it is what overcomes the gates of hell, together with sin and death; and triumphs, to the praise and glory of God."

One of Luther's great excellencies, as a divine, is the perspicuous and just order in which he constantly places the several doctrines of practical Christianity, and their effects. He is, on all occasions, solicitous to show, that the Christian life begins with, depends on, and is perfected through grace.

On the epithet "Wonderful," applied to Christ, ^{ix.} he makes the following observations:—

The man, whom he chooses to make truly godly, he causes first to feel himself almost a despairing sinner ; whom he chooses to make wise, he first makes a fool ; whom he chooses to make strong, he first renders weak ; he delivers to death, the men whom he means to quicken ; he depresses to hell, whomsoever he intends to exalt to heaven. This is the Wonderful King, who is nearest those, from whom he seems to be most remote."

The sermons of Luther are very numerous ; but it would lengthen this work too much to produce extracts from them. Most of his writings were published on the spur of the occasion, and have no pretension, in general, to the character of a correct and finished composition. On ordinary occasions, the Reformer certainly neglected his style. His mind was absorbed in objects infinitely more momentous. But he appears to have been roused to some attention, in this respect, by having to combat Erasmus ; and accordingly he evinced, on that occasion, a considerable acquaintance with polite literature.

A short time before Luther ventured to administer the Lord's Supper in the German language, he had the precaution to compose and print a very useful little book, containing thirty eight German hymns with their appropriate tunes, for the express purpose of conveying and fixing in the minds of the common people, religious instruction."

The book was a summary of Christian doctrine, expressed in very neat and elegant German metre ; and so well managed, that the harmony and modulation of the voice agreed with the words and sentiments, and tended to raise the correspondent affections in the minds of the singers. On this account the author has been called the true Orpheus of Germany.

Luther's productions, relative to the sacramental controversy, can afford but little satisfaction to Christian readers. We are compelled, indeed, in review-

ing them, to recognize that zeal, and fervor, and conscientiousness, which ever marked the character of the great Reformer ; but alas ! all these excellent qualities were, in this instance, sadly sullied by a lamentable obstinacy and perverseness of temper.

For some time the leaven of contention had been deeply at work, and was now exerting its mischievous operations with greater strength and with less secrecy. The absurd argumentation of Carolstadt had given Luther great advantage in the sacramentarian dispute ; but such able and learned divines as Zuingle and Oecolampadius, were not to be overawed or silenced, either by the talents and knowledge, or by the authority and violence of Luther. As they were in a good cause, and were convinced both of the nonsense and of the non-necessity of having recourse to such a doctrine, as that of consubstantiation in the interpretation of Scripture, they resolved to oppose it with firmness and perseverance.

The excellent and learned Zuingle composed and published a very elaborate commentary on true and false religion ; in which he not only treats on all the great points, both of natural and revealed theology, but also on the controverted question between the Papists and Protestants, and among others, on the meaning of the eucharist. This performance is a noble monument of the author's piety, learning, and intellectual powers, as well as a decisive proof of the blessed recovery of Christian truth in Switzerland.

While Zuingle was thus opposing, at Zurich, the Lutheran tenet of consubstantiation, Oecolampadius was employed in the same manner at Basil, and to say the least, displayed equal learning, piety, and moderation.

CHAPTER X.

PROGRESS OF THE REFORMATION, TILL THE DIET OF AUGSBURG, INCLUDING SOME ACCOUNT OF LUTHER'S TEMPTATIONS.

THE avowed, and unequivocal support, afforded to the Reformation by the new elector of Saxony, and the landgrave of Hesse, did not produce all the good effects which might have been expected from the wise and vigorous measures adopted by these illustrious princes. Their example, indeed, was followed by all the most enlightened princes of Germany, and in consequence, an improved union, more solid and better cemented than ever, took place among them. But the rest, who had hitherto shewn themselves averse to an open rupture, as soon as they clearly perceived that the Reformers designed to withdraw themselves from the Romish communion, and reject the jurisdiction of the pontiff, instantly took fire at the very idea of such a basis of peace and concord. Some of them had stood neuter, during the violence of the religious differences, and others had joined the Lutherans in their complaints against certain abuses of the established church; but none had ever once dreamed of entirely deserting the religious system of their ancestors; and as matters were fast advancing to a crisis, they thought it high time to make an open declaration of their attachment to the established hierarchy, and of their zeal and readiness to promote its interest.

Thus the discordant princes of Germany arranged themselves into two distinct parties, each of which seemed resolutely determined to adhere to its own peculiar tenets.

But there was this essential difference between the patrons of Popery and Lutheranism. All the mea-

sures of the latter were, in principle, purely defensive ; whereas the former meditated the complete extirpation of their adversaries ; and made no secret of declaring, that the only radical cure of the evil would be, to free the nation from the Luthérans heresy, and from those who protected it.

The Lutherans, alarmed at these proceedings, began to deliberate seriously, how they might best evade the blow, with which they were threatened by a powerful and bigoted confederacy. Various conventions of the princes were held in different places.—At Salfeld they came to this resolution, that it became them, as Christians, to do every thing to promote the glory of God, and to conform their practice to the revealed word.

Meanwhile mandatory letters, from Charles V. to his brother and representative, Ferdinand, calling for a diet of the empire, increased both the discontent and the alarm of all those German princes, who favored the reformation. The letters breathed nothing but destruction to the Lutherans, and the execution of the edict of Worms. He directed the diet to be held at Augsburg, on the next Michaelmas day ; and privately, in a milder tone, requested the elector of Saxony to be present. But this prince, at the instance of the landgrave, resolved on a previous measure, admirably calculated to defeat the violent designs of the papal party. This measure consisted in forming a speedy association with all the moderate and well disposed states of the empire ; the object of which should be to concur in representing to Ferdinand the imminent danger there was, at this time, of exciting fresh and more formidable riots and seditions by any attempts to execute the edict of Worms ; and how abundantly more safe and wise it would be to come to an immediate settlement, respecting the religious differences.

To these and similar measures must we ascribe the ~~medings~~ of the papal partisans at the diet of

Augsburg. That assembly did not meet till the month of November, and from the advanced state of the season and other causes, was but thinly attended. The diet was prorogued till the next year, to be then held at Spires. So far from directing the edict of Worms to be enforced, they satisfied themselves with repeating the evasive decree of Nuremberg; which, in general, enjoined the clergy to introduce no novel doctrines, but to preach the pure gospel, as it had been understood by the great body of Christians, to consult for peace and harmony, and to do all for the glory of God.

This appearance of lenity and moderation, was however, deceitful; being founded, not on any solid principles of justice and religion, but merely in the temporary fear of tumult and sedition. Even during the sittings of the late diet, the ecclesiastical princes had shewn themselves much elevated with the recent victories over the rebellious peasants, and in consequence, more disposed to violent and sanguinary measures. Thus the present calm was considered by the more judicious and thinking Protestants, only as a prelude to a tempest, shortly to be raised by all the powers of the established hierarchy, for the purpose of crushing effectually, not only the Saxon Reformer and his petty adherents at Wittemburg, but every German prince and state which had dared to oppose or dissent from the communion of the Roman church.

Besides, there were other reasons, which would naturally fill the minds of the Protestants with disquieting suspicions and apprehensions. So imbibed was the church of Rome against what they called the Lutheran heresy, that in every treaty which the pope had of late concluded with foreign powers, the absolute destruction and extirpation of all Lutherans was a specific article.

Another source of anxiety and alarm to the Protestant confederate princes was, the steady co-operation of Charles V. with the pope's tyrannical designs.

Alarmed by these appearances, those resolute and spirited Protestants, the elector of Saxony, and the landgrave of Hesse, met at Torgau, and there agreed on a treaty of mutual defence. Their next step was to invite others to join in the alliance. They appointed a second meeting at Magdeburg; there assembled, and again subscribed the same treaty with the addition of a considerable number of princes who followed their example.

The Magdeburg treaty, as it is called, does honor to the cause of the gospel, is worthy the courageous Christian characters who joined in it, and seems to have been the foundation of the famous league, which was afterward formed at Smallcald.

The federalists begin with praising God for his extraordinary providence, his great, and his unspeakable mercy, in having bestowed on them his sacred word, which is the only true comfort, the real food of the soul, and the greatest treasure in the world.—They then proceed to relate the numerous and powerful machinations, with which, to the present moment, they have been disturbed, especially by the clergy and their adherents, whose object it was to deprive the people of the use of the Holy Scriptures, and of those comforts, which the Scriptures afford to the heart and conscience. They express a hope, that God will continue to them this great blessing, the Bible. They were convinced, they said, by the information which they received from all quarters, that factions were forming, leagues and treaties entered into, and money collected, and all this for the purpose of extinguishing the truth of divine revelation, and of waging war against those princes and rulers, who felt themselves bound in duty and conscience to profess and protect the gospel, in their dominions. Impelled, therefore, by their own consciences, and a sense of their duty to d, it was for the reasons above mentioned, that ^{not} meaning to offend any one, they had mutually

agreed on a plan of pure defence against the war and violence, with which they appeared to be threatened ; and they hereby engaged to unite and exert every power they possessed against all those, who, under any pretence whatever, should attack them on account of their religion.

The diet assembled at Spires in the end of June, 1526, and was unusually well attended. All the electors, except one, namely, that of Brandenburg, were present.

At the opening of the diet, the emperor's representative informed the members, that it was the pleasure of his imperial highness, that in the first place, they should proceed to determine the best method of securing the Christian religion, and the ancient usages of the church ; then, how they should punish offenders, and compel to obedience such as forcibly resisted their injunctions ; also, how they could unite their mutual and effective efforts to procure the execution of the edict of Worms, which was now of five years standing.

Most of the deputies answered in writing, that it had been fully proved to the pope's legate, in a former diet, that it was then absolutely impossible to execute the edict of Worms, that now the attempt was become abundantly more difficult : because the religious disputes were daily increasing.

After many violent and unprincipled proceedings by the Romish adherents, the Reformers, at last, suggested the following expedient, which was consented to by the whole assembly ; namely, that the welfare of religion, and the maintenance of the public peace, made it necessary, that a general, or at least a national council, should be called, to commence within the space of a year ; that the emperor should, by a solemn address, be requested to procure such a council ; and that in regard to ecclesiastical concerns, and the edict of Worms, the princes and states, should,

in the mean time, undertake so to conduct themselves in their respective provinces, as to give to God and the emperor a good account of their administration.

Thus terminated, in a manner more advantageous to the Lutherans, than they could have expected, the diet of Spires. The resolution of the recess, it is true, was but evasive ; yet such were the existing circumstances, that a truce of this sort answered all the purposes, which the most zealous friends of the Reformation could desire. Their divines preached and wrote with greater confidence and less molestation ; and the anti-papal dispositions increased both in strength and numbers.

The blessed calm, which the church enjoyed after the diet of Spires, did not extend beyond those provinces and districts, which were under the jurisdiction of such princes and governors, as were favorable to the propagation of Christian truth and liberty. In Bohemia and Hungary, Ferdinand, now king of both countries, raged against the Lutherans with all the fury which papal ignorance and superstition, exasperated by opposition, could inspire. The rigor of the persecution in Bohemia may be inferred from a single instance. A person named Nicélas Tornar, and a widow of sixty years, named Clara, suffered death in the flames, merely because they denied their belief in the corporeal presence of Christ in the sacrament.

At Munich, the capital of Bavaria, George Carpenter was burnt alive in 1527, because he refused to subscribe to the Romish corruptions. While in the flames some of his pious friends requested him to give them a sign of the firmness of his mind ; he answered in these memorable words, " Let this be looked upon by you as the most certain sign of the steadiness of my faith ; that as long as I am able to un my mouth, or even to mutter, I will never cease to praise God, and confess the name of our Redeem-

But one of the most affecting stories of this kind, is the martyrdom of Leonard Cæsar; in the same year. He was born in Bavaria, and having begun to preach the gospel, was summoned to Passau to answer for his conduct. There, by imprisonment and menaces, he was at length induced to recant, was dismissed, and allowed to officiate again. Leonard, however, was so upbraided by his own conscience, and inwardly ashamed of his unfaithfulness, that, in about six months, he quitted his station, and visited Wittemburg and other places, where evangelical liberty flourished. After two years absence, hearing that his father was at the point of death, he ventured to return to his own country, where the minister of the village betrayed him. Leonard was carried to Passau and there imprisoned, during ten weeks, before he underwent the least examination. At length, when reduced to a very weak condition, he was called upon to answer hastily, to a variety of questions, read to him by the famous Eckius of Ingolstadt, who had been sent for on purpose to interrogate, confound, and overawe the poor heretic. His own relations earnestly solicited him to retract; but finding that in vain, they begged he might be allowed to have an advocate, and also a month's respite to recruit his feeble, debilitated frame. All was refused by the popish rulers; and Leonard was brought publicly before a solemn tribunal. Then it was, that the persecuted prisoner armed with divine strength, arose formidable to the powers of darkness, and defended the doctrines, he professed, with prodigious spirit and animation. He was frequently interrupted by the officer of the court, and told that he was not brought there to preach. The grand protestant doctrines were the articles he maintained. "Faith alone," said he, "justifies; works are the evidences of faith; but in the act of justification, works are distinct from faith, as heaven is from earth. mass is no sacrifice; neither is there any sacrifice sin, except the blood of Christ."

This good martyr wrote from his prison to his friend Stifelius, in strains of the most unaffected piety, thanking God, who honored, as he called himself, his most unworthy servant, and the greatest of sinners, with such an opportunity to confess his precious name, blessed forever. He entreated his dear brother in Christ to pray for him, that he might remain steadfast unto the end. Much pains were taken to procure his release and dismission. Noblemen of the first distinction, even the elector of Saxony himself, interceded with the Potentates of Bavaria, but all to no purpose. The Popish hierarchy proceeded to degrade him, and then gave him up to the civil magistrate; but not without first going through the usual mockery of praying that his life might be spared. His mournful relations, entirely against his own wishes, made their last effort to obtain the poor favor that their kinsman might be allowed to die by the sword instead of the flames. But the stern duke of Bavaria issued a pre-emptory mandate "for committing the incorrigible heretic to the flames."

The man's patience and constancy in prayer, the ardor of his soul, and his confidence toward God are indescribable. When the dreadful moment came, and he was placed on the pile, he said, "O Lord Jesus, partake in my sufferings; support me, give me strength;" and lastly, as soon as the fire began to burn, he cried with a loud voice, "Save me Jesus, I am thine;" and soon expired. Luther was vehemently affected with this tragedy, and professed himself ashamed, as he had done on former occasions, that he had not yet been thought worthy of martyrdom: "Oh," said he, "that I might witness such a confession, and suffer such a death! But God's will be done! Oh, ye persecutors, if ye thirst after blood and carnage, why do ye not turn your arms against the ~~—~~ For, after all, ye cannot oppress the cause I gave Gamaliel's advice, when I was emperor at Worms; but all is in vain."

To their common friend Stifelius, he speaks thus of the death of Leonard. "Oh wretched me, how far below this man am I! I am a wordy preacher, he a powerful performer. May Christ grant that we may be enabled to imitate this holy character!"

But Providence had designed trials for Luther more calculated to humble and subdue his spirit, and to perfect the strength of God in his weakness, than even martyrdom itself. The uncommon success with which his labors had been crowned, the celebrity of his character, the favor of princes and nobles, and the admiration, in which he was held by all the professors of evangelical truth, were circumstances, which had a strong tendency to exalt him in his own eyes; especially, when the native firmness and intrepidity of his temper are taken into the account. In fact, however, this extraordinary man was never without a thorn in the flesh, which proved an effectual counterpoise to all his attachments, and all his successes, and prevented him from being "exalted above measure." What was the nature of that thorn in the flesh, which disturbed the tranquility of St. Paul, it may not be easy to form even a probable conjecture; but in regard to Luther, his case may be understood without much difficulty by those, who are conversant with his writings, and who themselves have, in some degree, tasted of the grace of God in the Christian life. It was not a propensity to carnal gratification, but to a peculiar species of spiritual pride and self-righteousness.

While for a few moments we listen to Luther disclosing the secret weakness and distress of his soul; let us keep in mind, that this is the very same man, who was every day bidding open defiance to the greatest powers of Europe, and voluntarily hazarding his life for the sake of Christian truth and liberty.

"My sins have brought upon me the heavy wrath of God. It is not enough that the pope, the emperor, the princes, and bishops, should aim at my life, but my

religious brethren also, must torment my spirit. My sins, and all the powers of death, satan and his angels, rage without ceasing. And what is my hope?—I say, if Christ should forsake me, I am undone. But he never will forsake such a poor miserable sinner. Mine enemies are mighty; and add affliction to affliction, now that I am under the divine chastisement. But enough; let me not be querulous or impatient under the rod of him, who smites and heals; who kills and makes alive. Blessed be his holy will! When the world, and the prince of the world, hate me in this manner, it is surely some proof that I belong to Christ. My present trials are great; but the All-powerful One has done great things for me. May Christ, whose pure doctrine I have taught, and openly avowed, be my rock, and my fortress! Amen.”

To another he says, “It so pleases God, that I, who have been accustomed to comfort others, do myself stand in need of consolation. I have but one prayer, and I beseech you join with me in it;—that whatever Christ may be pleased to do with me, he would preserve me from ungratefully rebelling against him, whom I have hitherto preached and served with so much zeal; though, at the same time, I have offended him by many great sins. I still hope he will forgive me, and say, ‘I am thy salvation.’”

“There is nothing that my sins do not deserve; but nevertheless, I have comfort in the thought, that I have taught the gospel of Christ, in godly sincerity, to the salvation of many souls. This galls Satan; and he would destroy me together with the word itself. While others are called to the stake by the cruel tyrants, I suffer internally in spirit from the prince of this world. May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ perfect in me his holy will! Oh! how precious and useful is the secret contemplation of his will!”

“Say Christ comfort you,” says Luther to his friend Husman, “as you comfort me. I

thank my God, that Satan, with all his wonderful craft and all his powerful exertions, hath not yet been able to gain his will upon me. This is no ordinary temptation ; and so skilful is the wicked one in perverting the Scriptures, that my own knowledge of the sacred writings fails me on this occasion ; I stand in need of the help of my friends, and I am thankful for their consolatory communications. I open my case to you, in this manner, that you may pray the more earnestly for me ; and may also yourself, in like circumstances, if ever they should happen, be aware of the depths of Satan."

In the midst of his humiliation and confession of sin, we find Luther repeatedly taking comfort, as holy David did, from a consciousness of the integrity and purity of his motives. Thus to his friend Melancthon ; "Pray for me. I am a miserable abject worm of the earth, distracted with sorrow. But as this is the good will of the Father of mercies, glory be to him, what-~~ever~~ be my sufferings. In regard to myself, there is but one thing on which I lay any stress ; namely, that I have ever taught the word of God in its purity ; and on no occasion corrupted the truth, either through a love of glory or gain."

To another friend, he says, "Be serious in your prayers for me, that Christ may not leave me destitute ; for I am utterly without strength. I am sensible, that I stand in need of temptations, that God may be glorified in me, and that I may be humbled ; and I have still a good hope, that Christ will accept me, though I have listened, and do listen too much to the devices of Satan. It is astonishing how he can transform himself, not to say into an angel of light, but into Christ himself. I am compelled to own his power ; for he is outrageous in his attacks upon me. But Christ has faithfully preserved me, and will preserve me unto the end."

The history of Luther relative to his extreme sufferings, in the course of these temptations, does not depend entirely on the descriptions contained in his

own letters to his friends. Bugenhagius of Pomerania and Justus Jonas, were present, during one of the most severe attacks ; and were so much affected by what they saw and heard, that they committed to writing some of the most material circumstances.

It appears, however, clear that intense distress and agitation of spirit had laid hold of our Reformer more than six months before that very remarkable seizure, which they described. For he writes thus to Jonas on the 26th of December, 1526. " Oh my Jonas, pray for me, sympathize with me, in the agonies I undergo. The temptation is sometimes less, but returns again with greater fury. May Christ never forsake me ! May he chastise me as a son, but not punish me as a rebel. May I be strong in the faith even unto the end."

The narratives of Bugenhagius and Jonas relate to what happened on the sixth of the succeeding July ; when the mind of Luther must, of necessity, have been much broken down by the length and accumulation of his afflictions. To transcribe the whole would detain us too long ; but some remarkable parts of it may well deserve notice.

Their account is this. About eight o'clock, in the morning of Saturday the sixth of July, Bugenhagius was alarmed at being hastily sent for by Luther. He found him, however, in conversation with his wife, and looking just as usual. It seems, he had, that morning, experienced a most tremendous temptation, entirely of a spiritual nature ; and was seriously apprehensive, that if the hand of God should again be so heavy upon him, he could not survive the attack. On the whole, he suspected, he was about to die ; and retired privately, with his friend Bugenhagius, the parish minister, into his chamber, and there in secret committed every thing to God, and solemnly confessed his sins ; and then, says the writer, my master entreated me, his pupil, to give him a word of consolation from the Scripture. Afterwards, he recovered so as to be able to go out to dinner, and make the

company cheerful, as he always did. But in the evening he was suddenly seized with a fainting fit ; and cried out, "Oh, doctor Jonas, I am sick, bring me water or whatever you have, or I am gone." Jonas in a fright snatched up some cold water, and threwe it freely over him. At that moment, Luther was the very picture of death ; but soon after, he began to pray most intensely.—"If this be my last hour, O Lord, thy will be done ! O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger ; chasten me not in thy heavy displeasure. Have mercy upon me, O Lord. I would willingly have shed my blood in the cause of thy word—but perhaps, I am not worthy of that honor ; thy will be done ; only may thy name be glorified, whether by my death or my life."

Then, in the most solemn manner, he recommended to the blessing of God, the ministry of the sacred gospel, which had hitherto been committed to his charge. Upon which, Bugenhagius, almost senseless from deep and anxious concern, interrupted him, by saying, "Among your other prayers, my doctor, let this be one, that it would please God to continue your life for the good of us poor creatures, and of many others." "To die, replied Luther, would be gain to me, but—" and then without finishing the sentence, he thus seriously addressed Justus Jonas and Bugenhagius.—"The world delights in falsehood, and it will certainly be said, that I recanted my doctrines in the hour of death. I desire, therefore, you and Bugenhagius to be witnesses of my confession of faith. I am perfectly satisfied, that the doctrines which I have taught, concerning faith, charity, the cross, and the sacraments, are verily agreeable to the word of God. I was led by Providence, and not voluntarily, to act the part I have acted, in the ministry. Many have blamed me for having been deficient in moderation ; however in some instances, there has been in me no want of moderation, but what may be justified ; and most assuredly I have never intended harm to any person.

whatever. On the contrary, I have always wished to promote men's salvation, even the salvation of mine enemies."

After this, Luther gravely stated to the same persons his objections to the sacramentarians; calling God to witness the sincerity of his heart, and lamenting with tears the numerous sects that arose, and neither spared the flock nor the word of God. "What a bustle," said he, "will they raise after my death!" And then, with deep sighs and a vast effusion of tears, he confessed how intemperate he had been, at times, in his language, and appealed to Him who knows all things, that, in this, he had given way to the infirmity of the flesh, thereby endeavoring to shake off the burden of his afflictions, but that his conscience did not reproach him with harboring any ill will.

"Be ye my witnesses, however," said he, looking toward his two friends, "that on the subjects of repentance and justification, I recant nothing of what I have written against the pope. I feel that to be the gospel of God; and though some may think I have been too harsh, or taken too great liberty, I do not repent in that matter."

Luther then began to inquire after his child.— "Where is my dearest little John?" The child was soon brought smiling to his father, who immediately commended his good little boy, as he called him, and his mother, his dearest Kate, to a good and gracious God. "Ye have no worldly goods," said he, "but God, who is the Father of the orphan, and judges the cause of the widow, will defend and keep you. I give thanks to thee, O Lord God, that thy providence has made me indigent in this world. I have neither house, nor land, nor possession to leave. Thou hast blessed me with a wife and children, and these I return back unto thee; O feed them, teach them, preserve them."

To his wife he said, "My dearest Kate, if it is God's will, I request thee to submit to it; thou art my wed-

ded wife ; this thou wilt never forget ; and let God's word be thy constant guide."

His wife exhibited, on this trying occasion, extraordinary Christian fortitude. Almost heart-broken and frightened even to consternation, she yet preserved a good hope in her countenance. She allowed that not only herself and child, but many other Christian people would experience a great loss ; but she entreated her husband not to be uneasy on her account ; for if it really was God's will, that he should depart, she could submit to it cordially. She therefore commended him to the Lord God, under whose protection he could not fail to be safe.

By the external application of warmth, and by the use of cordial medicines internally, Luther soon recovered from immediate danger ; but such had been the violence of the paroxysm, that he experienced the debilitating effects of it during the remainder of the year.

On the Sabbath succeeding this memorable Saturday, Luther declared to Jonas, that on comparing the agony of his mind, during the spiritual temptation in the morning of the preceding day, with his bodily afflictions in the evening, the latter had not been half so distressing as the former. He added, "Doctor, I must mark the day. I was yesterday at school."

Similar trials of mind he afterwards endured, but none equally severe. Yet, during all these trials, Bugenhagius assures us, that Luther attended to every part of his duty, that he seldom omitted his public lectures, and generally preached on the Lord's day. Bugenhagius was frequently called during the hours of the night to visit him in his distress ; and repeatedly heard him say, "The violence of the temptation stupifies me, that I cannot open my mouth ; as soon as ever it pleases God, that I can lift up my heart in prayer and make use of Scriptural expressions, it ceases to prevail."

Bugenhaus tells us, that he found real satisfaction in being of some little service to Luther, through whose instrumentality, God had been pleased to reveal to himself the gospel of his Son.

Divine knowledge, the genuine conversion of souls, and the abolition of abominable superstition continued to progress, with no great interruption, for the space of ten or twelve years.

The success of the gospel, if we except the apostolic age, was perhaps, in this period, unexampled. Even in Italy, in a town called Fayenza, there was public preaching against the church of Rome, and the gospel increased daily.

We are, however, not to forget, that, notwithstanding this blessed influence of the written word, persons, who openly avowed their conviction of the truth, were miserably exposed to persecution in all those places, where either the civil or the ecclesiastical ruler happened to be an active and zealous Roman Catholic. The catalogue of the sufferers is very considerable. It may, however, suffice to add to the instances already noticed a few others.

In 1527, a Bohemian woman, after a confinement of almost a whole year, was cast into the flames, on account of two crimes laid to her charge.

1. That by denying the corporeal presence of Christ's natural body, she had blasphemed the sacrament of the altar.

2. That she had been rebaptized by John Kalens. The wooden cup, which Kalens had used in the administration of the Lord's Supper, was burnt with this heretic.

Sometimes the evangelical preachers, when proscribed by papal cruelty, fled from their habitations to save their lives. There is on record, an admirable consolatory letter of Oecolampadius, written in 1528, to two persons of this description then in exile. "It would move a heart of adamant," says he, "my dear

brethren; to think of your flocks, thus deprived of their faithful shepherds, dispersed and exposed to the wolves; then to see the adversaries triumphing and glorying in their iniquity; and the weaker brethren, who were on the very eve of renouncing popery, suddenly alarmed, and apprehensive of a similar treatment. Add to this the dangers, the ignominy, the distresses of exile, which are sometimes more grievous than death itself. For exiles undergo a daily death. However, when we reflect, that God is faithful, and will not tempt us above what we are able to bear, but will regulate every thing according to the strength, which he is pleased to give, this consideration supplies an abundance of substantial consolation. Be assured, the Holy Ghost, who has anointed you for this contest, will not fail to preserve you from fainting in the afflictions which ye undergo for the truth. Moreover, your silence, during your proscription, speaks louder, by much, to the hearts of God's children, than even your most animated sermons could do. Your present firmness fixes an inviolable seal on the doctrines you have been teaching with so much piety. The blood of Abel has a voice; and so has your persecution a tongue. Away then with cowardice and lamentation. Happy the man who is conformed to the image of the crucified Saviour, whom we preach. Christ knows his sheep; he will preserve them from the jaws of the wolf; and the exultations of hypocrites will be but for a moment."

In France the persecution was dreadful. The Papists persuaded the king that all the misfortunes, with which the country was afflicted, were owing to the mischievous heresy. In consequence, the most sanguinary laws were solemnly decreed against Lutheranism; and every one, who could be proved to favor that doctrine, was treated as a blasphemer. Yet this same prince, Francis I. notwithstanding the zeal with which his Catholic clergy availed to inspire him, had

no objection, for the purpose of more effectually serving his political schemes, to promote in Switzerland, that very reformation in religion, which he was laboring to expel from his own kingdom by fire and sword.

In North Holland, a widow, named Windelnut, was seized, on account of her religion, carried to the Hague, there strangled, and afterwards burnt to ashes. On her examination concerning the mass, she answered, "It was a piece of bread;" and in regard to the images and pictures of saints, she confessed she knew of no other Mediator but Jesus Christ. To one who told her, that she did not fear death, because she had not tasted it, this widow replied, "I shall never taste it; for Christ has said, if any man keep my sayings, he shall never see death." She was then advised to confess her sins to a priest; upon which, she cried aloud, "I have confessed all my sins to Christ my Lord, who takes away all sin. But if I have offended my neighbors, I heartily ask their forgiveness." She then went to the place of execution with meekness and courage.

At Rotenburg many of the Anabaptists, both men and women, were apprehended; and all put to death, that refused to recant their errors. Nine men were burnt; ten women were drowned. But their leader was condemned in a public court of judicature,—to have his blasphemous tongue cut out by the executioner; to be tied to a curriole, and to have two pieces of his flesh torn from his body in the market place, by red hot pincers; then to be torn again in the same manner five times on the road, as he was dragged to the burning pile. This sentence was executed on the 17th of May, 1527.

Notwithstanding these dreadful narratives, which sufficiently demonstrate the cruel and unrelenting hostility of the Papal hierarchy, there is no doubt but the cause of the war between Francis I. and the emperor, and also the dissensions, between the empe-

for and the pope, proved extremely favorable to the progress of the Reformation. For though the spirit of persecution was not in the least abated, yet it spent its chief fury on such defenceless individuals, as happened to fall into the cruel hands of bigotted rulers. The three potentates, above mentioned, were themselves beset with too many difficulties in their political affairs to give much serious and steady attention to the business of religion ; and their respective interests were often so opposite and perplexed, as entirely to exclude all amicable concurrences in the formation of any general plan for the extirpation of heresy. In effect, it is by reflecting on these jarring interests, with an overruling Providence constantly in the mind, that we are enabled in some measure to account, not only for the mild decree of the diet of Spires, in 1526, but also for the inefficiency of the succeeding attempts of the great Papal powers to stifle the revival of Christian truth and liberty. The pope, no doubt, was sincere in his desires to crush every symptom of growing Protestantism ; but Charles V. had neither leisure nor inclination to gratify the wishes of a pontiff, who had so lately entered into an alliance against him with the French and the Venetians. The religion of this prince, so far as it was real, is supposed to have been Roman Catholic ; but whatever it was, he never suffered it to interfere with his ambitious schemes of secular aggrandizement.— Even the pope himself ceased to have the least influence with him, the moment the politics of the court of Rome appeared to thwart those of his imperial majesty. On the other hand, the principles of Clement VII. were, in no degree, better. Under the pretence that hard and unjust terms had been extorted from the king of France, while prisoner in Spain, Clement at once absolved him from the oath, by which he was bound to execute the treaty of Madrid, and sent a person, both to congratulate him on his deliverance from

captivity, and to settle a treaty against Charles; and lastly, he despatched a brief to the emperor, full of accusation, invective, and menace.

These proceedings of Clement VII. inflamed the resentment of the emperor to such a degree, that he abolished the authority of the Roman pontiff throughout all the Spanish dominions, made war upon him in Italy, laid siege to Rome, and blocked up Clement himself in the castle of St. Angelo. There he was reduced to the extremity of feeding on asses' flesh, and at length compelled to capitulate on severe terms, and to remain a prisoner, till the chief articles were performed.

But to their lasting shame be it recorded, that the moment a prospect opened for the accommodation of their own respective political differences, both Clement VII. and Charles V. concurred in wreaking their united vengeance on the defenders of the sacred cause of religion and liberty.

The decree of the diet of Spires was equivalent to a toleration of Luther's opinions in all the states, where those opinions were approved by their respective governors or magistrates; but in 1529 a new diet was assembled at the same place, when the said decree was, by a majority of suffrages, so far revoked as to forbid all further propagation of novel opinions in religion. Those who had observed the execution of the edict of Worms, were ordered to continue the execution of it. Those who had changed their religious system, and could not, without danger of sedition, revert to the ancient usages, were to be quiet, and make no farther innovation till the meeting of a council. The celebration of mass was not to be obstructed in any place whatever; and lastly, the Anabaptists were proscribed in the severest terms, and made subject to capital punishment.

Uniquitous as was the decree of the second diet of

s, it would doubtless have been much more pi-

gorous and oppressive, if Charles had not been still at war with the French and his inveterate rival, Francis I. The recess of this diet is dated April ; and the peace of Cambray, between the emperor and the king of France, was not concluded till the succeeding August.

Fourteen imperial cities, with the elector of Saxony, the marquis of Brandenburg, the dukes of Lunenburg, and the prince of Anhalt at their head, in firm but moderate language, solemnly PROTESTED against the decree of the diet as unjust and intolerable ; and in every way calculated to produce discontent and tumult. Hence arose, for the first time, the denomination of *protestants* ; an honorable appellation, which, not only in Germany, but in other nations, is given to all those sects of Christians, who renounce the superstitions of the papal communion.

The Protestant princes and protectors of the reformed churches, were not satisfied with merely expressing their dissent from the decree of the diet ; they also drew up all their grievances in form, and appealed to the emperor, and to a future general council, or a lawful German council, and to all impartial judges. Lastly, they fixed upon ambassadors, whom they directed to lay all their proceedings before his imperial majesty.

The German ambassadors were introduced to the emperor at Placentia, and there they executed their commission with a spirit and resolution, worthy of the princes whom they represented. Nothing, however, could be more discouraging than the reception they met with, from this haughty monarch. When he had heard their objections to the decree, and they had waited a full month for his answer, he told them that he exceedingly lamented their divisions ; but nevertheless, insisted on obedience to the decree. He had written, he said, to the elector of Saxony and his associates, and had commanded them, in conformity to their oaths, to obey the decree of the diet ; and if they



were refractory, he should be compelled, for the sake of example and good government, to punish such contumacy with severity. He asserted, that himself and the rest of the princes regarded the peace of their consciences and the salvation of their souls, as much as the Protestants could do ; and moreover, that he was also as desirous of a general council as they could be ; though, said he, there would not be so much occasion for it, provided the lawful decree of the diet, especially that of Worms, were duly enforced.

On receiving this answer, the ambassadors produced the act of appeal, as it had been drawn up at Spires, but Charles' minister, for some time, refused to deliver it to his master ; and afterwards, when he had ventured to present that spirited memorial, the monarch's pride was so severely wounded by this instance of opposition to his will, that in a rage, he ordered the German ambassadors to be put under an arrest for some days ; and on pain of death, neither to stir a foot from their apartments nor write a line to the Protestant princes.

The account of this contemptuous and violent proceeding of Charles V. soon found its way to Nuremberg, and convinced the Protestant party that it was high time for them to consult for their protection, against a powerful potentate, intoxicated with success, and irritated by opposition.

Having met at several different places, their ultimate resolution was, " That each state should deliberate for itself, and within the space of a month, transmit to the elector of Saxony its peculiar sentiment ; in order that the Protestants at so critical a juncture might act in concert, both in regard to the common defence, and also the objects to be aimed at in the ensuing diet.

On the 31st of January, 1530, Charles V. sent mandatory letters into Germany for the purpose of summoning a general diet of the empire, to be held at Augsburg, on the 8th of April..

At the same time, the Roman pontiff, with fire and sword in one hand, and artifice and corruption in the other, endeavored to extirpate the godly Protestants ; and meanwhile, with consummate hypocrisy, expressed the most ardent wishes for peace and harmony, and the restoration of gospel principles in the church of Christ.

John the Constant, the excellent elector of Saxony, was determined if possible, to procure for the Protestants a fair hearing at the diet of Augsburg. And with a view to prevent all loose and fugitive discussions in a business of such immense importance, and also to enable any equitable judge to see distinctly, all the leading points of religion, which had produced so many volumes of controversy, he wisely directed his Wittemburg divines to draw up, in a narrow compass, the heads of that religious system, which had produced the separation from the Romish communion.

For the execution of a work of so great moment, the Protestant princes employed the elegant and accurate pen of Melancthon ; the result of whose labors was a treatise, admired even by many of its enemies for its piety, learning, and perspicuity. This celebrated performance is well known under the title of the Confession of Augsburg.

The issue of the diet at Augsburg was deplorable, and led the Protestants to conclude, that the pope and emperor had resolved on their entire destruction ; and they looked on the publication of the new edict, which was in effect, severer than that of Worms, as the signal for the commencement of more violent and barbarous persecutions than any they had before experienced.

The diet of Augsburg in 1530, forms a sort of era in the history of the Reformation ; but at present, we shall say no more concerning it, than—1. That the German princes, the magnanimous defenders of the sacred cause, assembled at Smalcald toward the end

of the year, and there concluded a solemn alliance of mutual defence; and—2. That some of the most wise and pious of the Protestant theologians, especially Melancthon, were so oppressed by the prospect of the calamities, which threatened the afflicted church of Christ, that they were almost ready to abandon the contest, and give themselves up to melancholy and lamentation.

But the Reformation, as we have seen, in spite of all the efforts of papal rage and malignity, did not cease to spread and prosper throughout various districts. Many instances indeed of the martyrdom of godly men might be added to the several catalogues already given; but the good Protestants were accustomed to these sufferings, and bore them with extraordinary patience and fortitude.

We shall conclude this volume with an observation or two on the conduct of Luther at the time of this very critical juncture.

1. Before the diet of Augsburg, in 1529, while the tempest of persecution was lowering on the faithful, this indefatigable servant of God was employed in publishing his lesser and greater catechism, which at this day are treatises of authority in the Lutheran churches. In the preface to each, he deplores the ignorance of the people at large, and asserts, that those, who know nothing of Christian principles, ought not even to be called by their name. He expatiates on the utility of catechising; recommends the frequent use of it to masters of families; cites his own example of attending to the first catechetical truths for the purpose of edification, notwithstanding the proficiency which, in a course of years, he might be supposed to have made; and observes, that daily reading and meditation, among many other advantages, has this, that a new light and unction from the Holy Spirit is hence, from time to time, afforded to the humble soul.—With such godly simplicity was Luther conversant in

the gospel practice ; and so totally distinct was the spiritual understanding and improvement, which he desired to encourage in the church, from the mere theory of frigid theological disquisition. Perhaps no history, since the days of the Apostles, affords a more remarkable instance of the humility and condescension of a primary theologian, in stooping to the infirmities of the weak, and lowering himself to the most uncultivated minds, than is exhibited by the publication of these two catechisms.

In the same year, Luther accompanied Melanchthon's commentary on the epistle to the Colossians, with a memorable eulogium on the author ; in which he frankly declared, that he preferred the works of Melanchthon to his own, and was more desirous, that they should be read, than any thing, which he himself had composed. "I am born," he says, "to be a rough controversialist; I clear the ground, pull up the weeds, fill up ditches, and smooth the roads. But to build, to plant, to sow, to water, and to adorn the country, belongs, by the grace of God to Melanchthon."

It was a singular felicity of the infant church of Saxony, that its two great luminaries, exceedingly diverse, as they were, in temper and in gifts, should have been constantly united in the bonds of strict affection, which never seems to have admitted the least degree of envy or jealousy. Such is the light, in which these two worthies are transmitted to posterity ; an incontestible pair of disinterested friends, whose sole object of contention was to excel each other in proofs of mutual regard !

2. It was in the low and desponding state of the Protestant party—for example, after such a lamentable defeat as they had suffered at the diet of Augsburg,—that the spirit and character of Luther were calculated to shine forth with peculiar lustre, and in their true and genuine colors. But his unwearied vigilance in superintending the reformed churches, by

his incessant attacks on the ecclesiastical corruptions and abuses, he had shown, to demonstration, that great and continued successes had, in no degree, disposed him to be remiss; and he now stood forward to prove, that notwithstanding the late untoward events and the magnitude of the impending danger, he was neither depressed by a reverse of circumstances, nor intimidated by the menaces of an arm of flesh, nor worn out by the length and obstinacy of the contention. In effect, this champion of evangelical truth always looked on the conflict in which he was engaged, as the proper concern of Almighty God, and on himself as the mere instrument in the righteous cause. His mind, deeply impressed with this conviction, remained serene and cheerful, and as vigorous as ever, for new attacks on popery, and for new combats with its unblushing advocates. He exhorted the princes never to abandon the great truths they had undertaken to support, and at the same time, he comforted his dejected friends, and employed much time in private prayer. At no period of his life was the weight and influence of Martin Luther more conspicuous than in 1530, when the religious differences seemed tending to an awful crisis. His fortitude was invincible, his zeal courageous, and disinterested; and happily they were both tempered by an extraordinary degree of rational and fervent piety.

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION,

TO BE ANSWERED BY THE PUPIL.

CENTURY I.

CHAP. I.

In what state did Christianity find mankind ?

Where did something of the worship of the true God exist ?

What ideas were almost unknown in Judea ?

Who made his appearance in this dismal night ?

What is the genuine secret of true piety ?

When did it please God to erect the first Christian church at Jerusalem ?

What had our Saviour done previously to this event ?

Where did the Apostles convene after our Lord's ascension ?

Give an account of the descent of the Holy Spirit.

Relate the circumstances which succeeded the descent of the Holy Spirit.

What may be said of the members of the church at this time ?

What were the effects of the Apostles' continued exertions ?

How were the Apostles treated by the magistrates of Jerusalem ?

How were they delivered from prison ?

What did they do, on being released from confinement ?

What was their reply, when accused of disobedience ?

How many deacons were chosen at this time ?

What was the office of deacons ?

Who of them was the most distinguished ?

You may relate the character and martyrdom of Stephen.

What may be said of that spirit, which shone in this first of Christian martyrs ?

Relate the conversion of Paul.

In what was he engaged from this time till his death?

What was the state of the persecution, after Paul had espoused the cause of Christianity?

In whose hands was the civil power of Judea at this time?

Which of the Apostles did Herod put to death?

How did Herod treat Peter?

By what means was Peter delivered from prison?

Can you mention the circumstances of Herod's death?

What was the next memorable event in the mother church?

You may relate the most prominent things respecting Galilee—Samaria—Cæsarea—Antioch—Galatia—Philippi—Thessalonica—Corinth—Rome—The seven churches of Asia.

CHAP. II.

When did the Apostles leave Judea?

What were the effects of their exertions among the Gentiles?

When did the Romans first issue edicts for persecuting the Christians?

Give an account of the persecution under Nero.

Can you give some account of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the sufferings of the Jews?

What became of the Christians of Judea?

By whom were the horrors of persecution renewed?

What edict did Nerva, the succeeding emperor, publish?

Which of the Apostles first suffered martyrdom?

What remarkable circumstance attended his death?

Give an account of the life and martyrdom of James the Just.

Who was appointed successor of James?

How long did the Apostle Paul labor in the ministry?

How many epistles did he write during this period?

How was he put to death ?

Who were the companions of this Apostle ?

What place was the great theatre of the Apostle John's labors ?

What does Tertullian relate respecting him ?

Relate the following anecdotes respecting John.

How old was he when he died ?

Who was Clement ?

What does Clement say respecting the atonement ?

— respecting justification ?

Recite the quotations, in which Clement acknowledged the agency and consolations of the Holy Spirit.

What change was effected in thousands ?

Whom did these Christian's worship ?

In what respects were they similar ?

CENTURY II.

CHAP. I.

Who was master of the Roman world at the commencement of the second century ?

How did this emperor feel towards the Christians ?

Who was one of the most venerable characters, that suffered during this persecution ?

Relate the most prominent circumstances in the life and martyrdom of Ignatius.

What do his writings evince ?

By whom was Trajan succeeded ?

How did Adrian treat the Christians ?

What was the success of the gospel at the same time ?

By what means was this persecution terminated ?

How did Adrian treat the Jews ;

You may relate the most prominent circumstances relative to an impostor who appeared at this time.

By whom was Adrian succeeded ?

What privilege did the Christians enjoy during the greater part of his reign ?

What appears from the edict of Antoninus Pius ?

What does this divine religion, about which there is so much contention, comprehend?

Who succeeded Antoninus Pius?

How did Marcus Antoninus treat the Christians?

What can you relate respecting Justin Martyr?

What do we learn from his writings?

Who was another distinguished character, that suffered during this persecution?

Relate the most important events of the life and martyrdom of Polycarp.

What should those ask themselves, who are content with a cold rationality in religion?

How far did the flames of Antoninus' persecution extend?

What is remarked of the sufferings which the Christians endured at Vienna and Lyons?

Give an account of the sufferings and death of one Sanctus, a deacon of Vienna.

How did females distinguish themselves at this time?

Give an account of the sufferings and death of Blandina.

What was done with the bodies of the martyrs?

What did the persecutors triumphantly say?

How does Christ's kingdom appear in the narrative before us?

What were some of the heresies which prevailed in the second century?

CENTURY III.

CHAP. I.

You may relate the most prominent things in the characters of Irenæus—Tertullian—Pantænus—Clemens Alexandrinus.

CHAP. II.

During whose reign did the third century commence? What did Severus conduct towards the Christians?

Where did the persecution rage with the greatest violence ?

What circumstances are here recorded respecting Origen ?

What can you relate respecting the persecution at Carthage ?

How far did Severus extend this persecution ?

Who was his successor ? and what was his character ?

What was the character of Heliogabalus ?

By whom was he succeeded ?

How did Alexander treat the Christians ?

What event took place in 235 ?

What events next took place ?

By whom was Philip succeeded ?

What character was very conspicuous during this period ? and why ?

Give an account of Cyprian—his character—and his election to office.

In what year did his conversion take place ?

How long was the whole scene of his public life ?

What will a few extracts from his letters evince ?

Recite some of them.

What events took place while Cyprian was laboring to recover the spirit of godliness among the African churches ?

What conspired to bring on a more dreadful persecution than the church had yet experienced ?

How far did the flame of that persecution spread ?

Who retired into a secret place during this persecution ?

To whom did Cyprian write during his retreat ? what does he evince ?

On what account did the persecution at Carthage appear very dreadful ?

With what other trials did Providence exercise the mind of Cyprian ?

Relate the conduct of Novatian.

- When did Cyprian return to Carthage ? and what was done on his return ?
- What put an end to the Decian persecution ?
- Who was Decius' successor ?
- By what were the Eastern and Western churches divided at this time ?
- What was the situation of the Gentile church at Jerusalem ?
- What did Origen endure, during the Decian persecution ?
- What does Eusebius say of him ?
- In what year did this great man die ?
- Who was at this time bishop of Alexandria ?
- With what were the Christians of Alexandria threatened during the Decian persecution ?
- What was said by one Maximus of Asia, when severely tortured ?
- What was the state of the persecution in Egypt at this time ?
- What can you relate respecting a young Egyptian by the name of Paul ?
- On what account is the whole scene of the Decian persecution memorable ?
- What two evils had their date from the Decian persecution ?
- Who soon began to disturb the peace of the church ?
- What bishop was sent into banishment at this time ?
- Who was chosen in his stead ?
- By whom was Lucius succeeded ?
- By what was the short reign of Gallus distinguished ?
- What was one of the evils which distinguished his reign ? and how were the pagans affected with it ?
- What measures did the Christians adopt to mitigate the public calamity ?
- What did this dreadful calamity give Cyprian an opportunity of doing ?
- In what year was Gallus slain ?
- What did the people of God find in Valerian ?

What was transacted in a council, held at Carthage with Cyprian at their head, in the year 253?

At what time did Valerian commence a most dreadful persecution?

What may be remarked of the change which took place in Valerian?

Relate the circumstances of Cyprian's banishment.

Relate the martyrdom of Sixtus, bishop of Rome, and Laurentius his chief deacon.

By whom was Valerian taken prisoner? and how treated?

How were the Christians treated by Gallienus, his successor?

What new scene do we now behold?

How long was the example of Gallienus followed?

Who was the greatest luminary in the church at this time? and what can you relate respecting him?

What account is here given relative to Paul of Samosata?

What is evident from this account?

What heresy appeared during the reign of Probus?

What account is here given of Dioclesian?

What was the state of the church at this time?

CHAP. III.

Give an account of Gregory.

CHAP. IV.

What was the success of the gospel in the 3d century?

CHAP. V.

What may be said of different opinions with regard to their influence on practice?

What are the peculiar doctrines of the gospel?

What do we learn from the history of the church during the three first centuries?

What did the Christians of the three first centuries believe?

Why were they patient under the severest injuries; content in the meanest circumstances, &c.?

What would be the effect of taking from these men the peculiar doctrines of the gospel?

CENTURY IV.

CHAP. I.

Who spent a whole winter in plotting the destruction of Christians in the beginning of the 4th century?

In what manner did the persecution commence?

How extensive was it?

How were Christians put to death at this time?

Give an account of the persecution in Egypt.

How did the sufferers endure these cruelties?

What were the effects of this persecution?

What do these things demonstrate?

What change took place in the empire in 305?

What can you relate respecting one Paul, when sentenced to lose his head?

How long did this heavy persecution continue?

Who succeeded Constantius? What was the end of Galerius? What edict did he publish? What was its effect?

Under whom did Syria and Egypt remain?

How did Maximian treat the Christians in these countries?

What was the end of Maximian?

CHAP. II.

How was the emperor Constantine affected towards the Christian religion?

By what means was he induced to embrace Christianity?

Is it thought that he was really a pious man?

When we look at the external state of the church during his reign, what do we behold?

What schism originated at this time?

Relate the most prominent things relative to Arius, till he was condemned by a second Synod at Alexandria.

How did Constantine regard the Arian controversy?

What was the result?

What testimony does this afford us?

When did Alexander die? Who succeeded him?

Relate the history of Arius from this time till his death.

How long did Constantine survive this event?

By whom was he succeeded?

What do we know respecting Constantine II. and Constantius?

What was carried on during the reign of Constantine's sons?

What can you tell about the emperor Constantius?

By what means did Constantius become sole master of the empire?

How were the friends of the Nicene faith treated?

By what means did the Arian party gain proselytes?

When did Constantius die?

What did Paganism experience during the reign of Constantine and Constantius?

To whom were the eyes of the Pagan votaries directed?

What was the character of Julian? How did he attempt the restoration of idolatry? What were the circumstances of his death?

What is here recorded respecting Athanasius?

By whom was Julian succeeded?

On what account does Jovian deserve to be particularly mentioned in ecclesiastical history?

What were the most important events that took place in his reign?

At what time did this emperor die?

What were the effects of his death?

What can you tell about his successors?

What was the internal state of the church at this time?

What is remarked of Athanasius?

What was the only comfortable circumstance in the East?

What was the prospect in the West?

Relate the most prominent things in the character of Ambrose.

Who succeeded Valentinian?

Whom did Gratian choose for his colleague?

What appeared in Gratian from his earliest years?

What did he say when speaking of the Son of God?

Who was chosen bishop of Constantinople?

What efforts were made to effect a reformation in the church?

By what means did the emperor Gratian lose his life?

What was the state of his mind, when dying?

What heretical sect appeared, during the reign of Gratian?

How were the heretics treated by Maximus the usurper?

How were the truly pious effected by these things?

What were the most important events that took place from this time till the death of Valentinian?

Who became master of the Roman world?

What can you relate respecting Theodosius?

CHAP. II.

You may give an account of the propagation of the gospel in the fourth century.

CHAP. III.

What can you relate respecting Ephraim, the Syrian?—Basil?

CENTURY V.

CHAP. I.

What were some of the most prominent things in the life and character of Chrysostom, from his birth, till he was promoted to the office of presbyter of Antioch?

What were some of the interesting events which took place, while he continued at Antioch?

To what office was Chrysostom next appointed?

Relate the circumstances relative to his banishment.

Why was he recalled from banishment?

What other interesting circumstances can you relate respecting Chrysostom?

AUGUSTINE.

At what time did God grant a second great effusion of his Spirit?

Who was the great instrument of this work?

You may give an account of Augustine's conversion.

What was the frame of his mind at the time he was admitted into the church?

Can you relate the circumstances of his mother's death?

To what place did Augustine return after the death of his mother? To what office was he elected?

What new heresy sprung up at this time?

What did this heresy introduce?

Where was Pelagius born? What is Pelagianism?

What farther account can you give of the Pelagian heresy?

What can you tell about the Donatists?

What may be remarked of Augustine's City of God?

What was the occasion of his writing this treatise?

What does he recommend in the method of catechising?

What is said of Augustine's exposition of the Psalms?

Of his treatise on the Trinity?

What does Augustine describe humility to be?

Relate the circumstances of his death.

What were the most prominent things in the character of Jerome?

What do the lives of other Christian authors of this century evince? what do they testify in their writings?

CHAP. II.

What was the general state of things at this time?

What can you relate respecting Germanus?

You may give an account of Semipelagianism.

Where did the influences of the gospel, in this century, begin to be felt?

What is recorded respecting Palladius?—Patrick?

What event took place in the year 439?

What was the character of Genseric?

How did he treat the bishops ?

What interesting circumstances can you relate respecting a number of captives, who were delivered into the hands of a Moorish king ?

What was the situation of the whole empire of the West at this time ?

By whom was Genseric succeeded ?

How did Huneric treat the faithful ?

How did the captives, whom he had delivered to the Moors, appear while approaching the deserts ?

With what did the whole country resound ?

How were the captives treated by the Moors ?

What else can you relate respecting Huneric ?

Give an account of Theodoric, the Ostrogoth ?—

Epiphanius bishop of Pavia ?

What reformation took place in France at this time ?

What evil do we see progressing in the church, during this century ?

What was the state of the church in Spain, France, &c. during this century ?

What were the vices which tarnished the Western church ? What the Eastern ?

How were the Christians in Persia treated at this time ?

How long did Theodosius reign ?

What was his character ?

By what means was the public compensated for his remissness ?

To whom did Theodosius leave the empire ?

To whom did his sister give herself in marriage ?

What were the favorite objects of Marcian ?

What can you relate respecting a Jewish impostor of Crete ?

What was the general appearance of things ?

CENTURY VI.

CHAP. I.

When did Thrasamond commence his reign ?

What was his character ?

How did he treat the orthodox ?

Can you mention the most prominent circumstances in the life of Fulgentius ?

In his writings, what does he evince ?

What was the general appearance of the church both in the East and West during this century ?

How were Christians in Arabia Felix treated, during the reign of Justin ?

What can you relate respecting Justinian ?

In what year was a council held at Orange in France ?

Repeat a few passages which express the sentiments of the godly men who composed this council ?

CHAP. II.

Relate the most prominent circumstances relative to Gregory from his birth, till he entered upon his bishopric ?

What were the ruling dispositions of Gregory ?

By whose means was the whole period of his episcopacy rendered disastrous ?

What does he say to a friend when speaking of his bodily sufferings ?

What can you relate respecting John, bishop of Constantinople ?

Who wrote against the haughtiness of John ?

By what means did Gregory lay the foundation of Popery ?

For what purpose did he allow people to make use of images in the churches ?

How did this practice terminate ?

What was the predominant feature in the character of the emperor Mauritius ?

Relate one specimen of his avarice, and the circumstances connected with it ?

What induced Gregory to offer himself as a missionary to the Island of Great Britain ?

What prevented the work at that time ?

At what time did Gregory send missionaries to England ?

Who was at the head of them ?

Give an account of this mission.

When did Gregory die?

To what did he sincerely devote himself?

CENTURY VII.

CHAP. I.

How did Great Britain appear in the 7th century?

You may relate the most important circumstances relative to the spread of the gospel in this century.

What blessing did the northern part of Europe receive during this century?

Who were honored as instruments of this blessing?

CHAP. II.

By whom was Phocas, the Greek emperor, slain?

What was his character?

Who desolated the eastern part of the empire, during the reign of Heraclius?

Can you relate the most prominent circumstances relative to John the Almoner?

What can you relate respecting Chosroes, the Persian king?

What heresies were prevalent at this time in the East?

What heresy appeared in 630?

Who protested against it?

What can you relate respecting, Martin, Bishop of Rome?—Maximus?

Give an account of Mahomet, the Arabian impostor?

At what time did Africa fall under the power of the Mahometans?

To what was this region, which long refreshed us with evangelical light, consigned?

What was the state of the church in England, France, Italy, &c. at this time?

What was the state of the church in the East?

CENTURY VIII.

CHAP. I.

You may relate the character of Bede.

CHAP. II.

What further account can you give of the Mahometans?

CHAP. III.

From what does the marvellous propensity to the sin of idolatry originate?

At what time did some approaches toward this evil appear in the church?

What crisis finally arose?

What events took place in the year 727?

What is meant by Popery?

What was the person called who governed the church of Rome from time to time?

What can you tell about the pope?

What did Leo do to prevent the growth of idolatry?

What were the consequences of his efforts?

In what year did Leo and Gregory die?

What were the Arabians doing at this time?

What was the situation of the real church?

What was the substance of a letter, written by Zachary, the successor of Gregory, to the dukes of France?

What did the pope, from this time, assume?

CHAP. IV.

What is here related respecting the Irish?

Where is the real church to be seen in this century?

Who supported pious missionaries among the Heathen?

You may give an account of Willibrod.

Who was, in this century, the great light of Germany?

Give an account of Winfrid's missionary tours.

Mention the circumstance of his death.

What other missionaries might be mentioned?

CENTURY IX.**CHAP. I.**

To what may the several circumstances, which attended the darkness that pervaded this period, be reduced?

What was, at this time, considered essential to salvation?

What absurd tenet was introduced in this dark period?

What is here recorded respecting Charlemagne?

CHAP. II.

Give an account of the Paulicians.

CHAP. III.

By whom were the corruptions of popery opposed in this century?

You may relate the most prominent circumstances in the life of Claudius Gotteschalcus.

CHAP. IV.

Whom did Providence make use of for the propagation of the gospel?

What is here recorded respecting Cyril of Thessalonica?

At what time did the Russians receive a knowledge of the gospel?

What can you relate respecting the two Adelards — Ansarius?

CENTURY X.**CHAP. I.**

What was said by a friend of the Roman see respecting the wickedness of this age?

What may be remarked of the wickedness of the popes?

What is the general history of the church at this

was one of the most remarkable instances of ~~u~~ to the pope?

Repeat a few words of the president of the council of Rheims?

With what churches did the Spirit of God continue?

What were the Normans and the Turks doing at this time?

CHAP. II.

In what country was the gospel planted during this century?

What can you relate respecting Adelbert, Archbishop of Prague?

What was the state of Christianity in Denmark and Sweden at this time?

Into what countries did the light of the gospel penetrate?

By what means was the gospel introduced into Poland?

When did Russia form a Christian establishment?

To whom must the work of propagating the gospel appear laudable?

CENTURY XI.

CHAP. I.

What circumstances demonstrate that the Spirit of God had not forsaken the earth?

What was the state of the Eastern church in this century?—the Western?

What were the great sources of political contentions at this time?

With what were the crusades attended?

What was the state of Africa at this time?

Into what regions did missionaries continue to penetrate?

What was their success?

CHAP. II.

What was the character of Margaret, queen of Scotland?

What were the most prominent things in the life of Anselm?

What do his works demonstrate?

Repeat a few extracts from the writings of Anselm?

CENTURY XII.

CHAP. I.

What were some of the most prominent things in the life and character of Bernard, previous to his defence against Abelard?

Where was Abelard born?

What were some of the prominent traits in his character?

You may relate the most important events of his life previous to his being opposed by Bernard.

What course did Bernard pursue with Abelard to convince him of his errors?

On what occasion did Abelard challenge Bernard to make good his charges of heresy?

What determined Bernard to meet Abelard at the time and place appointed?

What were their proceedings after having arrived at Sens?

What do the bishops of France affirm in a letter to the pope respecting these proceedings?

What was the influence of Bernard's labors in this cause?

What orders did the pope issue against Abelard?

With what does the term Cathari correspond?

What can you relate respecting the Cathari?

How does Bernard attack them?

What overbalances all his invectives?

You may repeat an extract from the writings of one of this sect.

On what does Bernard insist in a small tract concerning conversion?

Repeat a few extracts from Bernard's sermon on the Solomon.

What do his writings evince ?

What can you relate respecting the death and character of Bernard ?

Who is generally considered the best of the fathers ?

CHAP. II.

What may be remarked respecting the Eastern church at this time ?

What can you relate respecting the crusades ?

What gave a new tone and vigor to the human mind at this time ?

How great was the influence of the bishops of Rome ?

What declaration did Innocent III. make ?

What was the situation of England at this time ?

You may relate an instance of the barbarity of Henry II.

Where was the true church to be found in this disastrous period ?

What consolation does a true believer find, when contemplating the darkness of this period ?

CENTURY XIII.

CHAP. I.

What time did the Cathari live ?

When did they receive a great accession of numbers ?

By what were they distinguished in this century ?

Where were they peculiarly numerous ?

Who was their founder ?

At what time was the acknowledgment of transubstantiation required by the court of Rome ?

By whom was this and other corruptions of Popery opposed ?

What occasioned the religious concerns of Waldo ?

How did Philip Augustus treat the Waldenses of Picardy ?

What farther can you relate respecting Waldo ?

What were the effects of Waldo's exertions ?

How were the Waldenses treated thro' rope ?

- Under what disadvantages did they labor?
- By what names were they called?
- You may repeat some of the following testimonies of their enemies.
- What doctrines did the Waldenses embrace?
- What is the external history of the Waldenses?
- Why were they considered the greatest enemies to the court of Rome?
- At what time did the pope institute the court of inquisition?
- Who were the first objects of his cruelty?
- How many of the Waldenses were hanged and burned by this wicked device in the former part of the 13th century? What was their sole crime?
- For what reason was the work of imprisonment deferred in 1228?
- How many professed the religion of the Waldenses in 1530?
- What became of a preaching monk, whom the pope sent among them?
- What were the consequences of his being murdered?
- What was one of the canons of a council held in 1229?
- Give an account of the sufferings of this people in the valley of Pragela and Lyons.
- How long did their persecutions continue, more or less violent?
- What does this scene evince?

CHAP. II.

- From the foregoing account what is the reader prepared to conclude?
- By what means was the gloom of ignorance increased?
- Were there any who saw through the sophistry of the fashionable learning?
- For what was Roger Bacon distinguished?
- Give an account of the Dominicans and Franciscans?
- What circumstances evince the pretended auth-
or of Gregory IX?
- You may give an account of the Ottoman empire.

CENTURY XIV.

CHAP. I.

What was the general state of the church in this century?

What was a means of diminishing the reverence of mankind to the Pope?

What was one of the latest and most absurd corruptions of Popery?

CHAP. II.

What is there interesting in the character of Thomas Bradwardine?

What were the most prominent things in the life and character of John Wickliff?

What does he say respecting the good works of unbelievers?

What does he say about the corruption of human nature?

CENTURY XV.

CHAP. I.

What terms have in all ages been applied to real Christians?

What was the character of the Lollards?

You may give some account of their persecutions.

What was the principal object of a synod, assembled at London in 1413?

On what account what was Lord Cobham very obnoxious to the ecclesiastics?

How was he treated?

You may relate the circumstances which afforded the clergy an opportunity to gratify their resentment against this noble chief of the Lollards.

What were the circumstances of his death?

How did he die?

You may give some fair accounts of the sufferings of the Lollards.

What were the effects of these cruelties?

When we are wearied with the contemplation of the barbarous scenes of this century, what is one of the most certain conclusions we can arrive at ?

CHAP. II.

What was the character of the council of Constance?

What was the object of this council?

What was effected by this council?

What countries were represented by deputies at this council?

Who were at the head of this council?

What was the character of these men?

Who was summoned to appear before this council?

Give some account of John Huss, previous to his going to Constance.

You may relate the most prominent circumstances of his trial.

Can you give some account of the death of John Huss?

How were the Popes treated by this council?

Who was the next object of their cruelty?

What was the character of Jerome of Prague?

Why did he go to Constance?

How was he there treated?

What were the next proceedings of the council?

By what means did the council induce Jerome to retract his sentiments?

What was the substance of Jerome's retraction?

How was he treated after his retraction?

Why was he examined the second time?

What did he then exhibit?

What were the proceedings during this examination?

You may relate the circumstances of his death.

What was one of the valuable purposes, to which the council of Constance was subservient?

What did the council proceed to do near the close of the year 1417?

When was this celebrated council dissolved?

CHAP. III.

What are the most prominent things in the history of the Hussites, till the beginning of the Reformation?

CHAP. IV.

What interesting circumstances are recorded in review of the fifteenth century.

CENTURY XVI.

CHAP. I.

How does the sixteenth century open?

What did the world behold soon after the commencement of this century?

You may give an account of the popish doctrine of indulgences.

CHAP. II.

At what time did Leo X. succeed to the popedom?

What was his character?

In what year did the Reformation commence?

How was this great work begun?

You may give some of the most interesting particulars of the private life of Luther, previous to his assumption of that public character, which has rendered his name immortal.

What induced the Saxon Reformer to act the part which has given so much celebrity to his name?

What two points are there respecting Luther, in which all the learned concur in their testimony?

What is the only just censure which can be affixed on his character? What are some of his excellencies?

What did Tetzel do in consequence of the publication of Luther's theses?

What was done by way of retaliation?

How did Leo X. behold the ecclesiastical disputes in Germany?

How did the clergy behold them?

What were the proceedings of the Roman pontiff, when he became roused from his indolence and security?

What method did Luther take to protect himself against the rising storm?

How did Frederic the Wise conduct on this occasion?

What was the substance of the conference between Luther and Cajetan?

CHAP. III.

What was the condition of Luther, after his return from ittemburg?

What was an excellent part of Luther's character?

To what did the court of Rome next have recourse?

What became of Tetzel?

You may give a short account of the dispute at Leipsic?

Who was the only prince that publicly favored the Reformation?

Who is numbered among the most powerful instruments of the Reformation?

What endowments concurred to render him eminently serviceable to the Reformation?

CHAP. IV.

What were the proceedings of Miltitz, the pope's nuncio?

How was Luther affected by these things?

Who began at this time to reply to some of Luther's adversaries?

On what condition would Luther consent to be silent?

What circumstances took place in the year 1520, which tended greatly to encourage the Saxon Reformer?

What did Luther do on hearing that the court of Rome had determined to publish his condemnation?

At what time did Leo X. publish his famous edict against Luther?

What did the edict contain?

With what reception did it meet?

What defensive steps were taken by Luther at this time?

By whom was Europe governed during a considerable part of the fifteenth century?

Who were then actors upon the great drama?

What prevented their uniting to crush the Reformation?

What were the effects of Luther's wisdom and of Melancthon's learning?

What was the grand point which Luther had most at heart in all his labors, contests and dangers?

For what purpose did Charles assemble the diet of Worms?

You may give a short account of the proceedings of the diet previous to Luther's arrival.

What was the substance of the emperor's letter to Luther?

What did Luther say to a friend, while on his journey to Worms?

What memorable answer did Luther return to his friends, who urged the danger of his proceeding to Worms?

What was Luther's reception at Worms?

What were the proceedings of the diet after Luther's arrival?

What were the feelings of the popish partizans, during this interesting scene?

What did the enemies of the Reformation intend to effect?

What plan was contrived to conceal Luther from the rage of his enemies?

Whom did Charles employ to draw up the final sentence against Luther?

What was the substance of this edict?

What were Luther's books producing at this time?

What may be remarked of this season?

CHAP. V.

How were the followers of Luther affected by the sudden disappearance of their leader?

What reports were circulated respecting Luther after his concealment?

How was he employed at this time?

What encouraging things did he hear respecting the Reformation?

What intelligence reached him that was calculated to damp his joy?

When did Luther leave what he called his Patmos, and return to Wittemburg?

What induced him to do this?

What were the effects of Luther's return to Wittemburg? What was his situation at this time?

What work did Luther publish in the year 1522?

To what did he then proceed?

What were the effects of his publishing a translation of the Scriptures?

How was the work treated by the popish princes?

How were the Lutherans treated by George, duke of Saxony? By whom was Leo X. succeeded?

What was the character of Adrian?

To what did Adrian exhort the diet of Nuremberg?

How were the German princes affected with these exhortations?

To what did they advise?

For what purpose was a combination formed by the pope, the emperor, and the bigotted German princes?

How did this combination terminate?

With what did Charles V. begin, at this time, to astonish all Europe?

How did he treat the people of God in Flanders?

What change was effected in Denmark at this time?

What in Sweden?—in Hungary?

What was the general state of the Reformation?

You may give a short account of the Calvinistic and Helvetic denominations.

What were the proceedings of another diet, held at Nuremberg?

What did these proceedings occasion?

What was Luther doing at this time?

What was the situation of Germany during the years 1524 and 1525?

At what time did a civil war commence in Germany?

What were the most important circumstances relative to this war?

What distinguished patron of the Reformation died in the year 1525?

CHAP. VI.

Relate the circumstances of Luther's marriage.

CHAP. VII.

What may be said of Erasmus' merits as a restorer of learning?

What eminently qualified him as a proper champion to engage Luther?

By what means was he induced to become an open adversary to the Reformers?

You may give an account of the controversy between Luther and Erasmus.

In what do the writings of Erasmus abound?

CHAP. VIII.

How did John, the new elector of Saxony, conduct the religious concerns of his dominions?

By whom was the Reformation adopted?

CHAP. IX.

What book did Luther compose and print, a short time before he administered the Lord's Supper in the German language?

What may be remarked of this book?

What is said of the productions of Luther, relative to the sacramental controversy?

By whom was the doctrine of consubstantiation opposed?

CHAP. X.

Who followed the example of the elector of Saxony and the landgrave of Hesse?

What was the consequence?

What essential difference was there between the patrons of popery and Lutheranism?

How were the Lutherans affected by these proceedings?

What circumstance increased the alarm of those German princes who favored the Reformation?

